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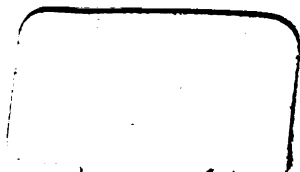
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GREAT LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS
THEIR METHODS ILLUSTRATED





H. L. DOHERTY
Singles Champion of the World

28

GREAT LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS

Their Methods Illustrated

By GEORGE W. BELDAM

AUTHOR OF "GREAT SOFTERS"

AND

P. A. VAILE

AUTHOR OF "MODERN LAWN TENNIS"

ILLUSTRATED

BY 229 ACTION-PHOTOGRAPHS

London
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D. L. DOHERTY
Singles Champion of the World

W. A. Bates
the author
of
27

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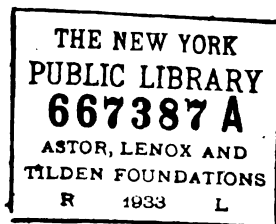
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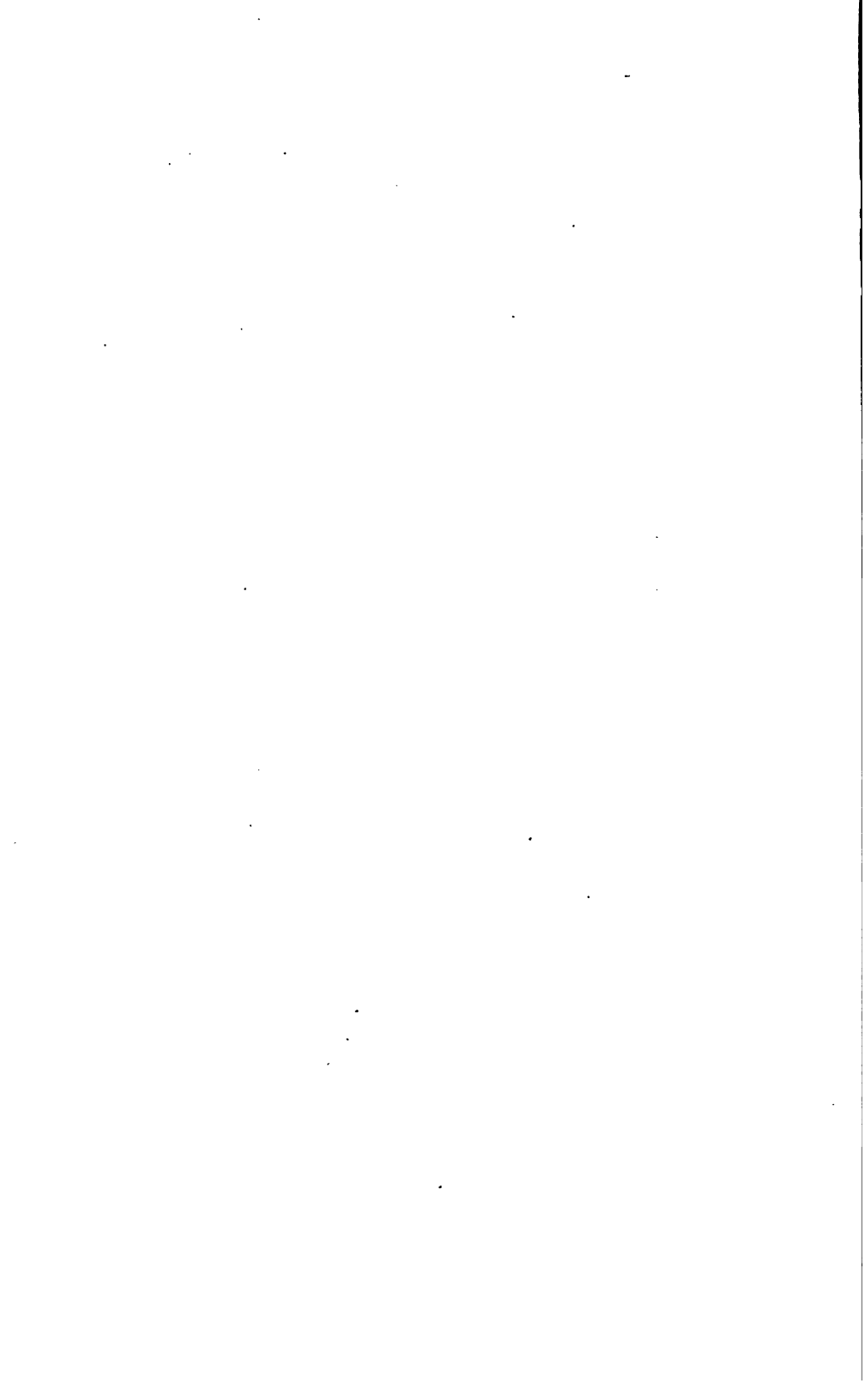
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LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

WHO LOVES THE GAME WELL



PREFACE

THE way in which my first book of action-photographs—*Great Golfers*—was received has prompted a similar attempt on my part with regard to Lawn Tennis. It is not intended that this work should take the place of the books on the game written by champions and experts, but that it should rather be looked upon as a supplement to them. If it be true that action-photographs will often do more than pages of description to show how certain strokes should be played, then one of the aims of this book should be attained. The photographer has to approach Lawn Tennis under very different conditions from those which exist in Golf. In the latter game, from the point of view of the photographer the ball is for the most part stationary, and to a considerable extent so is the player, but in Lawn Tennis both are very much on the move. This fact has increased the difficulties usually encountered in taking action-photographs—for one hand had to be on the release, while the other was on the focussing screw. In addition, the camera had to follow the player's movements, and at the same time the

operator had to divine a good deal. Timing with the camera is, therefore, more difficult in Lawn Tennis than in Golf photography.

Perhaps the quickest way to improve at any game is to constantly play with those superior to ourselves ; possibly the next best thing is to watch the great exponents ; and failing both of these I venture to think action-photographs are good substitutes. But these only show, in the matter of teaching, what one has trained the eye to see. Yet action-photographs will influence where technical knowledge is lacking.

My thanks are due to the various players who so kindly helped me in every way, and also to the All-England Lawn Tennis Club and Queen's Club, both of whom gave me every facility for taking these photographs.

G. W. BELDAM.

PREFACE

WHEN I wrote *Au revoir* at the end of the Afterword to *Modern Lawn Tennis*, I had no idea that I should be with you again so soon. It is not entirely my fault that I am. While Mr. G. W. Beldam was photographing the subjects of my illustrations in *Modern Lawn Tennis*—which was after I had finished the book—he suggested to me that we should collaborate in the production of this book, and I, seeing the possibilities of illustration by photograph—especially by such photographs as are reproduced here—readily consented.

I am not about to make any excuses for my sudden reappearance on the Lawn Tennis literary stage. If I wanted one, the illustrations of this volume would be quite sufficient ; and moreover I have hundreds of times, on the dramatic platform, witnessed the speedy return of artists and artistes without half the encouragement that the Press of the United Kingdom has given me to “take an encore.”

One might be inclined to say that, after the recent publication of a work which has been generally pronounced the most exhaustive that has yet been published in connection with the game of Lawn Tennis, there

cannot be much left to say. My answer to this is, that I am strongly of opinion that the true science which underlies the game of Lawn Tennis has not yet *begun to be realised* by the players of the United Kingdom.

Now this, I am aware, may sound very conceited. I am taking that risk this time. In commenting on *Modern Lawn Tennis* many of the reviewers referred to my eminently "modest" estimate of my own abilities. I am afraid that I shall this time leave no room for a repetition of these remarks, as, on striking a general average after a perusal of this book, I am afraid the balance may be against the modesty.

I think it would be a bad advertisement for theory, if one who has gone so fully into the matter as I have could not carry out in practice a considerable portion of that which he lays down. This I have no hesitation in saying that I can do. There will no doubt be some persons who can do some of these strokes in a more perfect manner, but all these strokes and many more I have, and not only have, but am able and always willing to teach others. I have explained in *Modern Lawn Tennis* that I cannot play the game according to the standard which I have set myself. That may sound amazingly modest, but its value is shattered when I explain that I have never seen the man who could.

So far as my own play is concerned, I should say nothing, were it not that I am so fond of the game that I should not like it to be thought that I cannot play it a little; so I shall just content myself with saying that when in form I can always make the other man

play good Tennis to beat me—and I am not always beaten. For the greater part of the last two years I have been a wanderer on the face of the earth, and when one has for most of that time been playing a game which consists of a kind of back-hand cut—or draw—followed by a pop and a fizz, it takes some few months before one can return to one's true "form." I use the term advisedly. This "personal explanation" is suggested to me by the fact that one reviewer of *Modern Lawn Tennis*, who had not sufficient ability to review the book from a scientific standpoint, sheltered himself behind my humorous reference to myself as a "Tennis failure." He could not see the "science" in either my Lawn Tennis or my wit.

This book has been christened *Great Lawn Tennis Players. Their Methods Illustrated*. Now, it would ill beseem me to say who did this. There was, I may say at once, no disagreement about it. It is so much easier to smother one's modesty than to argue; and greatness, after all, is such a variable and relative quality. Thus was again exemplified the fact that some are born to greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. The latter has generally been my misfortune, although I get so much of it that I am almost inclined to think that I must also have an hereditary predisposition to the quality. For nearly two years I have been striving against becoming too "great" a player—alas! I am afraid with but poor success—and now, in some respects, and quite without any credit—nay, in fact, with a considerable debit—to me, I am a greater player than any here shown; and if you cannot see that clearly I shall be much

better pleased than if you can. To get away from this egotistical talk, which really is, if you analyse it, excess of modesty, I may say that I have been finding theory enough to give the players of England something to think about for some time, and that I hope, long before they have ceased to think of my theory, to show them some of it, under another name, per medium of the racket and ball. It is a remarkable fact that really very few Lawn Tennis players can justly be termed "great" players. Both at Cricket and Golf there are numbers who may be correctly so called, but at Lawn Tennis this is not so. It will be otherwise within a few years, for the greatness and science of the game have yet to be fully realised.

Talking about theory reminds me of another thing I want to say to my readers, and that is, "Mind you don't get overcharged with it." For the man who is crammed with all kinds of fads and theories which he cannot demonstrate in practice I have no time. No one could be stronger on theory than I am, but I am thankful to say that when I get on the court it takes another name. It becomes nature. If, when you see a ball coming down the court towards you, your mind flies away to *Modern Lawn Tennis* or *Great Lawn Tennis Players Their Methods Illustrated*, go inside and burn them. They are clearly not for such as you, and you are in danger of suffering from that dread Tennis disease which cripples the limbs and mind, and arises from being "hide-bound with theory." You may learn from these volumes all that is, at present, required to make a champion, but you must take it out of the book into yourself; and when it is

there you have no need to think of the husk from which you have extracted the kernel.

The greater the knowledge which you have of the great scientific, strenuous game which Lawn Tennis unquestionably is, the greater will be the pleasure you will derive from it. I must repeat that in England, although we hold here the championship of the world, at present the true science of the game is but dimly appreciated. I am now going to draw largely upon that credit for modesty which the British Press has so kindly placed to my account, and if it should end in an overdraft—what harm? It won't be the first time, and figures never did worry me. The only question is, "Is the game—or the fun—worth the candle?" and in this case you will agree with me that it is, for the result to be achieved is to improve Lawn Tennis in England out of all recognition.

I have, in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, referred to what I consider the very defective grip of the racket which is favoured by most players. I shall later on deal with the subject again, but I desire to emphasise my belief that the very large handles, and the prevalent hold used by English players, combined with the double-stringing of the racket, are tending to ruin the game and reduce it to pat-ball.

I hope English players will pardon my extremely plain manner of expressing my ideas about their play, but it may be some time before I again address them in a volume on my favourite game, so I have decided to leave no room for doubt as to what I mean.

I am aware that I do not think on the same lines as most people. Firstly, my thoughts or convictions are gener-

ally much stronger, and, moreover, I have an hereditary tendency to think "off the track,"—which is generally good so long as you are not shunted on to the asylum line, or side-tracked at Fadtown. If these "points" are carefully attended to, the train of thought may have quite a good run, and deliver its fresh goods safely, to the enjoyment of those waiting for them. This may sound *a propos* of nothing, but it is not.

The impression formed on my mind after watching a very great deal of English Lawn Tennis, including the All-England Championships last year, and the Covered Courts and All-England Championships this year, is that of a number of persons endeavouring to play billiards without a knowledge of "side," or a bowler essaying to take wickets without an understanding of "spin." Both, no doubt, can be done, but how imperfectly, and with what limited enjoyment! So it seems to me is it now with Lawn Tennis in England. I cannot help seeing that not one player in fifty has any notion of what the ball is capable of doing when ably directed; or how, by a knowledge of spin, one may turn an opponent's strength into his weakness; may puzzle him so that three times out of five he is out of position for taking the service, and on the other two occasions is doubtful as to what it is going to do. There is no doubt this can be done, and should be, for physically and mentally the English players are surely the equal of any. Why, then, is it not done?

My answer is—Because the average English player uses a big handle and a wrong grip, and so robs himself of many beautiful and useful strokes which he should possess.

Those who have not seen English Lawn Tennis may think this a strong statement. I, of course, knew the defect existed, but even I was almost astonished when one of the leading players of the United Kingdom said to me, "All this about the rotation of the ball is quite new to us ;" and, as a matter of fact, students of Lawn Tennis will know that, strange as it seems, this important matter has never been dealt with by Lawn Tennis writers.

I do not believe in making assertions that I cannot substantiate, so I shall give here a list of strokes which are practically not used by the English players :

1. The chop (Fig. 24, *Modern Lawn Tennis*), a most valuable yet practically unknown stroke, and one never, so far as I know, illustrated and fully dealt with previous to the publication of my book.

2. The back-hand horizontal drive (similar in many respects to S. H. Smith's fore-hand), with or without lift. This is a powerful and beautiful shot.

3. The fore-hand volley with lift, played on balls at or about the elevation of the shoulder, and, if played near the net, capable of producing a return at a deadly angle across court. In *Modern Lawn Tennis* (Plate 24) A. W. Gore may be seen playing that which would be the shot I mean were his racket ascending instead of following on.

4. The same stroke as that described in paragraph No. 3 but on the back-hand, which is, if anything, a more effective and natural return.

5. The fore-hand cut service, similar to that delivered by C. H. L. Cazalet and illustrated herein.

6. The reverse overhead service : a service which

is almost unknown simply on account of the bogey of not changing grips, yet one of the finest services there is, as P. de Borman's exaggeration of it should have convinced English players.

7. The cut lobs—both fore-hand and back-hand—most useful strokes, fully explained in *Modern Lawn Tennis* (Fig. 26 and accompanying letter-press).

8. Straight fore-hand drive, with or without lift, where the ball is struck close beside the leg. A most useful stroke in emergencies, and also where time is not of the essence of the contract, yet practically barred by the prevalent hold.

9. Straight back-hand, a more valuable stroke than the preceding one, for it can be played naturally much sooner than the other, and also more naturally takes lift. If you have any doubt of the value or beauty of this stroke, see Caridia play it with a plain-face racket, and for ever after hold your peace. This stroke also is barred by the usual English grip.

10. The overhead volley with fore-hand cut, one of the most valuable placing volleys or smashes in the game, yet practically unused.

11. The overhead volley with reverse cut, a most useful and deceptive smash or placing volley.

12. The "American" service, as it is called. Eaves serves one description of this very well, and scores repeatedly on it. The reverse (Plates LXIV_A to H herein, and K, Fig. 14, *Modern Lawn Tennis*), which is quite as easy to acquire and possibly at times more effective, he does not use.

13. The drive off a rising ball is practically—except to Caridia—unknown. I blame the grip for this, as with

it one cannot naturally give the angle to the face of the racket which is necessary (as shown in Fig. 23, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) to counteract the rising tendency of the ball.

14. Cut volleys at the net are practically unknown, yet are deadly scorers. Again I blame the prevalent grip, which for all close work about the head and shoulders is too effeminate for words—that is to say, words which the publisher would pass—to describe. The pull-back volley (p. 38, *Modern Lawn Tennis*), although very useful, is never played.

15. The chop service, illustrated herein, is a very ugly service to negotiate. It sacrifices a little length, no doubt, but, delivered to a base-liner who likes a high bounding ball, has the merit of spoiling his shot to a great extent, as it keeps low and tempts him in, so that you can put your return at his feet if you cannot find a better place. In any case it is a good change service, especially after the American or even the pure lifting service, as the rotation is exactly opposite to that of the latter.

16. Last, but nearly equal to all the rest together in importance, the king of ground strokes, the absolute monarch, the fore-hand lifting drive, played at or near the top of the bound (Fig. 15, *Modern Lawn Tennis*), has not in England to-day a single finished exponent, although Anthony Wilding, the promising New Zealand player, is beginning to show English players the value of it.

Now all these strokes are practically unknown to—or at least not played by—the English player. I am not finding fault without being prepared to

lead the way to improvement. I am prepared to show any Tennis player who has not all or any of these strokes, and who cannot get them for himself from *Modern Lawn Tennis* and this book combined, how to acquire them. I am convinced that the English grip has to answer for the paucity of strokes in the game, and it has to be altered, or the championship of the world will, in Lawn Tennis, as in a lot of other things, drift away from us.

All that I can see that we have got in exchange for the strokes mentioned above is the ability to play pat volleys from our feet, from a position we have no right to be in.

I have to express my thanks to the Lawn Tennis players of England, who have rendered me such valuable assistance in the production of this book, and particularly am I indebted to Messrs. E. G. Meers and G. A. Caridia for many kindnesses, not the least of which are their interesting contributions to this volume.

P. A. VAILE.

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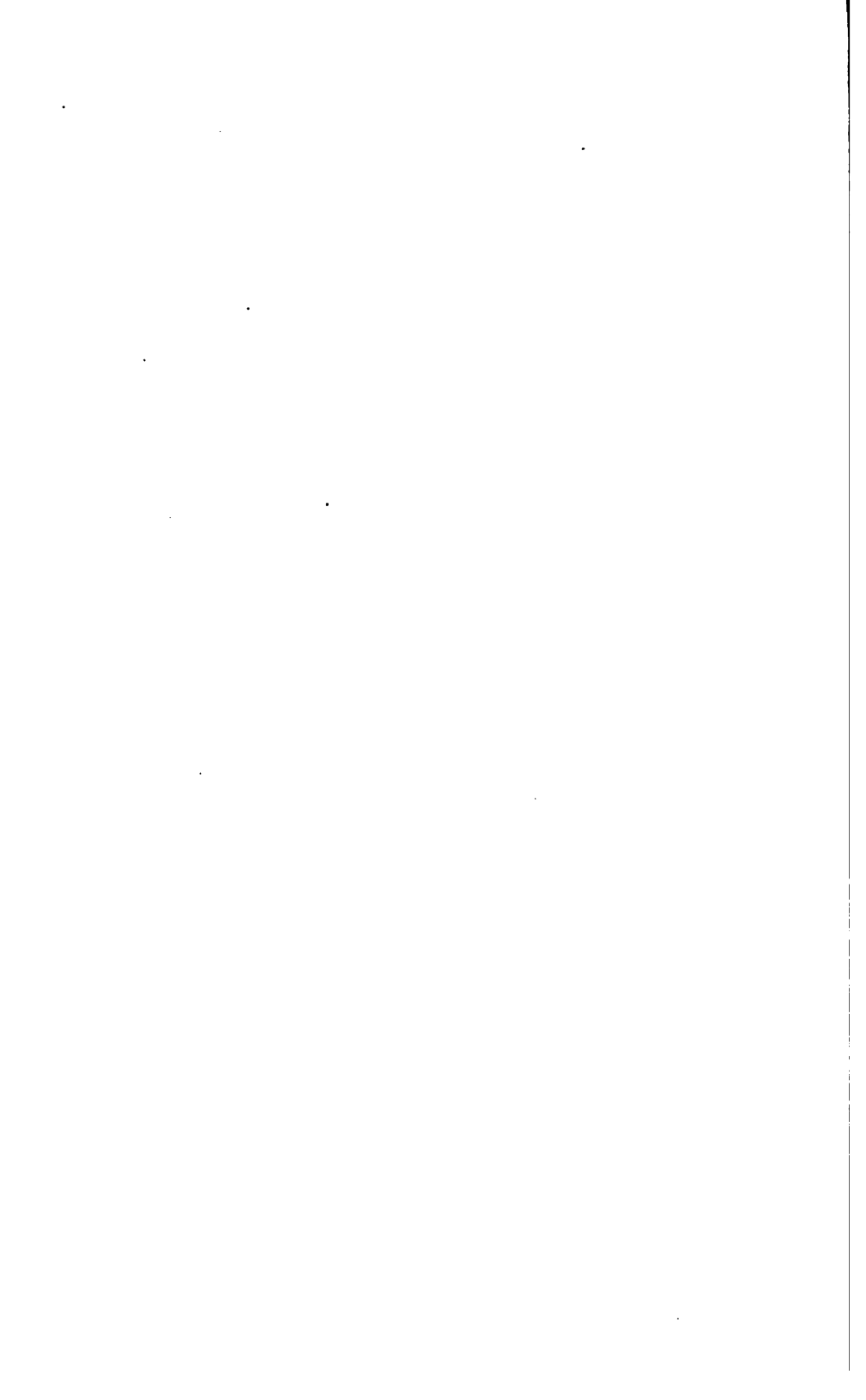
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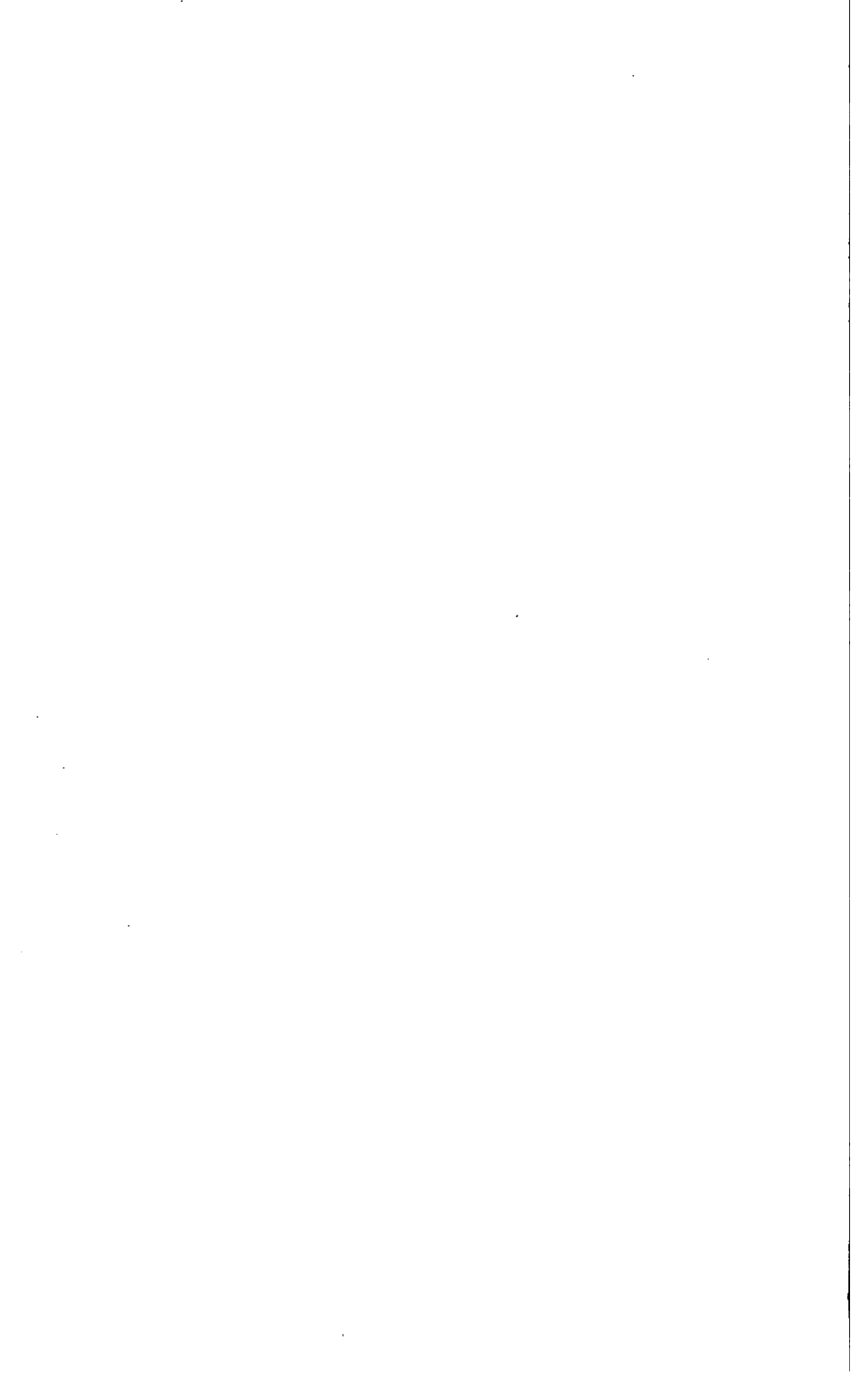
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GREAT LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS

THEIR METHODS ILLUSTRATED



RACKETS AND GRIPS

I HAVE not hitherto dealt with this matter so fully as I have wished to, and as it is a matter of considerable importance and, I hope I shall be able to prove, of some interest to players, I propose to give it a little attention here.



PLATE I
P. A. VAILE

FORE-HAND GRIP

This photograph was taken specially to show the racket in a line with the arm, and not, as in the subsequent photograph, where the racket is being held by me with an English grip, and at the nearest approximation to a straight line that I can force it into.



FIG. II
L. VAILE

ENGLISH FORE-HAND
GRIP

This shows the English fore-hand grip, and how the leather or knob anchors on the prominence at the junction of wrist and hand, instead of as in my hold, and especially with the small knob or leather, resting on it. The same argument applies even when, as is often done, the grip is taken further up the handle. The racket is actually held as one holds a small axe or tomahawk. If the force were required to be exerted downwards all the time, as with an axe, the grip would be faulty, but as the power is nearly always wanted in a different direction this is wrong.



PLATE IIA
P. A. VAILE

ENGLISH BACK-HAND
GRIP

It will be noticed that the racket at the time of striking the ball exerts its leverage on the arm in just the position in which the wrist is least able to withstand the strain. Hold your racket thus, and press against the head of it in the direction in which a ball would force it, and you will feel the weakness of the hold. Here again, the strongest action of which the arm is capable is downwards, which is exactly the reverse of that which is required of the back-hand.



FIGURE III
A. VAILE

BACK-HAND GRIP
THUMB ROUND HANDLE

This grip shows arm and racket again in a straight line. It is a firm grip, capable of producing effectively nearly every shot in the game except fore-hand strokes below the shoulder, and even these in difficulties can be played with it if one has a supple wrist.



PLATE IV
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND GRIP
THUMB ROUND HANDLE
REAR VIEW

This shows the strong grip which is obtained by this hold, and also arm and racket in the same line.

If you turn this plate round and look at it so that the racket-head is uppermost, you will see one of the finest grips it is possible to have for the plain smash and some of the services. It is apparent that the weight of impact comes across the wrist-joint.

PLATE V

OLD FORE-HAND GRIP

This grip has almost gone out. De Borman, the Belgian champion, uses it. I have no hesitation in saying that it is immeasurably superior to the present English grip ; and although, in deference to public opinion, I have shortened my grip, I am by no means satisfied that it is an improvement. Messrs. Slazenger and Sons are making to my specification for experimental purposes a racket which, held as shown above, shall give me the same reach as the present-day racket held short. There can be no doubt that with this grip the wrist is much freer than with the English grip, and if a player's wrist will stand the extra strain involved, of some inch and a half of leverage, I should certainly advise it in preference to that commonly adopted in England.

I find that both the Baddeleys still retain this grip, but their hold differs from mine in that they never change. The grip has the merit of bringing the racket into line with the arm, and so naturally producing a stronger stroke than with the ordinary English grip. The Baddeleys lay great stress on the importance in time saved in volleying if you retain one grip. This is unquestionably correct, and I agree that when you require to save that time you need not alter much, if at



GREAT LAWN TENNIS PLAYERS

THEIR METHODS ILLUSTRATED



PLATE VI
P. A. VAILE

OLD BACK-HAND GRIFF
FRONT VIEW

This grip gives a very free wrist action, and is moreover a fine strong grip for nearly all shots.



PLATE VII
P. A. VAILE

SAME GRIP AS IN PLATE VI
SHOWING HOW STRAIGHT BACK-
HAND SHOT IS PLAYED

Note the position of the points of the toes ; this shows how the racket passes in relation to the body.



PLATE VIII
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND GRIP
THUMB *STRAIGHT* UP
HANDLE

In the English grip the thumb lies rather more across the handle and pointing more downwards.



PLATE IX

THE "DEMON" RACKET

My object in showing this racket will appear from a study of the following plate and letterpress in connection therewith.



PLATE X
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND
HOLD ON "DEMON"
RACKET

PLATE X

BACK-HAND HOLD ON "DEMON" RACKET

The "Demon" is rarely seen at a tournament now. This is not because it has no right to be there; but because tennis players, like all other human beings, are sheep who follow unquestioningly the lead of success, not counting in any way that that which suits one may not suit another. As a matter of fact the "Demon" has the most perfect hold, speaking from a mechanical point of view, especially on the back-hand, of any racket I know, and on both hands, were it rendered less flat, it would be hard to beat. Look at Plate X, and see how naturally the swell of the muscle of the little finger—*flexor minimi digiti*, I believe its proper name is—nestles into the hollow, and how the prehensile power of the little finger, on account of that fact and the continued hollow, is equal to that of the third, while away up the back the thumb rests naturally and firmly in the groove supplied for it. The surplus horns of the "Demon" should be rounded off from immediately past the last point of contact with the flesh as shown above; otherwise they are apt to come, in the fore-hand stroke, against the bony eminence opposite the ball of the thumb. If this were done, and the handle made rounder, it would only require some champion to use it to make most players discard

straight handles. Although I am speaking so highly of this grip, which is unquestionably a good one, I am unreasonable enough to use the straight handle always. Perhaps if I had an E.G.M. with a "Demon" handle modified as suggested by me I might try it.

The usefulness of the hollow in letting your hand down on to the racket is however, in my mind, undoubted. In nearly all rackets now made the leather at the end is unnecessarily large. This knob comes just under the swelling of the *flexor minimi digiti*—I hope that's right—before referred to, so that instead of getting your hand right on to your work your grasp is tilted up. I drew Messrs. Slazenger & Sons' attention to this as I considered it a defect in construction, and they, with that readiness to seize upon any practical improvements which is so characteristic of them, immediately decided to make the leathers much smaller in future unless otherwise ordered. As a racket is only held in one hand, the question "palm-hold" *versus* "finger-grip" cannot arise, as it does in cricket, or golf, or similar sports, where the implement is grasped by both hands. In these cases "finger-grip" is unquestionably of great value, as if you resort too much to "palm-hold" you will find your wrists fighting against each other. This does not however apply in Lawn Tennis, and it is of great importance to secure a comfortable, firm, and natural grip. It is a certainty that the smaller leather improves your chance of doing this.

PLATE XI

THE "VAILE" GRIP

This plate represents an E.G.M. with rubber insertions as shown by the dark marks on the handle. The rubber does not in any case come on to any of the corners which are the prominent points of contact with the hand, so that one has a wooden grip with the frictional engagement of the rubber. It gives a fine firm grip, and combined with the small leather is a most comfortable handle. The long pieces of rubber which are on both back- and fore-hand sides, to suit various players, are provided to engage the thumb when playing a back-hand stroke. It is almost an impossibility for this racket to turn in one's hand.

In the grip as manufactured by Messrs. Slazenger and Sons for the "P. A. Vaile" racket, the rubber insertions are dull red, so that only a very close observer would perceive that the handle was in any way different from an ordinary one.

PLATE XII

RACKET STANDARD AND RACKETS GENERALLY

Plate XII. represents another idea of mine which Messrs. Slazenger & Sons and Mr. Thos. J. Tate have authorised me to state that they will in future adopt on all their rackets. The standard length of all first-class rackets is twenty-seven inches. The height of the net at the centre should be thirty-six inches. Generally on a club lawn, almost invariably on a private lawn, one has to hunt for a standard or stick to see if the net is right. I suggested to Messrs. Slazenger and to Mr. Tate that in future they should rough, or otherwise mark, all their rackets exactly nine inches up the handle. This they intend to do, so that now by using any two rackets—as shown in Plate XII.—the height of the net may be ascertained. Rackets practically never vary in length, but, as the nine inches must always be right, if desired, the racket, which should be twenty-seven inches, can easily be checked.

I was told by one genius that it was not wanted, that there were always sticks handy at tournaments, and it did not matter for garden parties and “home consumption.” I have been at tournaments where one has had to worry round for the standard, and it does matter about home consumption. I should like to know that tennis is becoming more popular in the home, even as



PLATE XI

THE "VAILE" GRIP



PLATE XII

RACKET STANDARD

it is as a club game. There is no better, healthier exercise for the rising generation, and I sincerely hope that the number of private lawns will increase in as large a ratio as have the club courts.

Now as to rackets generally. There are, so far as I am at present concerned, three to which I give serious consideration—these are the E.G.M., the Queen's Club (which is practically an E.G.M. with a different handle and splice), and the Doherty (which, in my opinion, is an E.G.M. spoiled).

[Since writing the above I have had the pleasure, for the first time in England, of playing with a Tate. Many years ago, at the antipodes, I used some of these rackets, and discarded them as "boardy." Possibly I had bad luck ; and no racket is ever really the same, I think, after it has passed through the tropics. I may say, however, that I am now not only prepared, but fully intend, to give the Tate some serious attention, and shall possibly find occasion to give the results of my investigations.]

The E.G.M. is very clearly shown in Plate XI. It is a well-strung racket, which volleys and drives well with one who knows how to do these things behind it.

This racket is the result of much thought, experimenting, and careful comparison of balance and stringing, bestowed upon it by the well-known veteran Mr. E. G. Meers. In fact, for a considerable time, when Mr. Meers happened to be away from his office, it is alleged that he could always be found at Messrs. Slazenger and Sons' giving them the result of his previous evening's experience.

The Queen's Club is shown in Plate VII. It has a

cane splice right down the middle of the centre-piece, and the splice then continues down the middle of the handle, which is faced with cane instead of wood running down both front and back. The roughing and the black piece following it, as shown in Plate VII., are all cane. This gives the handle, I think, more elasticity, particularly for all driving and glancing blows, without in any way interfering with the necessary amount of rigidity. In other respects the Queen's Club is practically an E.G.M. Plate III. will show its structure plainly.

The Doherty is very clearly shown at Plate VI. If you want an abomination in the way of a racket, buy a large-handled Doherty, as many are using them now, with the weight stuffed into the wood of the handle, and the life knocked out of the face by the double stringing. Some people will buy anything a champion uses, and accept as gospel anything he says. I do neither. I like to "try things out" for myself.

To be just to the Doherty, I must say that I have—since the face has been lengthened, and the finer gut has been used in them—had some lovely rackets of this make; and if you want to do all the work, especially the volleying, without assistance, get one. If you want some help, get a single string racket, but always avoid the very big handle.

If you will look at the Doherty you will see that it has double stringing in the centre; that is, that the two long centre strings are duplicated. The only result of this is to deprive the racket of a considerable portion of its spring and life just where it requires it most. Many people who do not understand the "true innardness" of these things think that because the

Messrs. Doherty win with these rackets they must be best. These amiable people forget that it is, if anything, more certain that the Messrs. Doherty would win with either of the other rackets mentioned. The double stringing which is used by several manufacturers is quite as great a fad as the big handle business, and I shall be pleased to hear of the death of both, for the double stringing stiffens up the face of the racket, and the big handle stiffens up the muscles of your wrist and forearm, so that if you have the two, and the prevalent grip, and don't play pat-ball, you ought to get a single string racket with a proper handle, change your grip, and train for the championship of the world.

Messrs. Slazenger and Sons are producing to my specification a new racket which they are calling the "P. A. Vaile." The prominent features of this are, no duplicate stringing, the long face, and a small handle never in any case to be larger than five inches in circumference; and in addition to this it will, for those who desire it, be fitted with the rubber insertion "Vaile Grip" and, or, rubber "button" instead of leather, and in every case it will have the very thin leather or rubber "button" instead of the large thick leather which has hitherto been used.

Most of the leading racket manufacturers in London seem to think it desirable to obtain almost the extreme of tension on the gut of the racket. I can remember when I was "married" to that idea, and I am not yet absolutely divorced. It has only got so far as the decree *nisi*.

I think the glassy-faced rackets now made eminently suitable for plain ball hitting, but when it comes to playing the game with a full knowledge of, and

desire to use, rotation of various kinds, such as in the American service, it becomes a question in my mind as to whether the extreme of tension is desirable. It seems to me, that to produce the perfect game of Lawn Tennis, the player should have a racket with sufficient resilience to drive well, and yet with enough "give" to get a solid grip on the ball. Provided that he then has a ball to correspond, that is, with not too hard a covering nor excessive inflation, I think he has the implements to develop a perfect game. As a knowledge of the value of rotation spreads, and is appreciated, these facts I believe will be borne in upon Lawn Tennis players, and through them upon racket-makers.

Mr. F. H. Ayres has made to my specification two rackets, one with the extreme of tension and another of medium, and it is my intention to give them a thorough trial and compare the results. I hope later on to be able to throw some further light on this matter, for it is of great importance to the game.

The Americans are always keen on anything which tends to give them an advantage in their games, and there has lately been produced in New York a new racket called "The Hyde." Mr. F. H. Ayres, who is the agent for England of this novelty, showed me one. The invention consists of knotting the gut in every other longitudinal string at a distance of three-quarters of an inch apart, thus enabling the player to get a greater hold on the ball, and so approximating to my idea of "grip" in a racket. I have not yet tried this racket, but the idea appears correct from a mechanical standpoint.

I should like here to express my pleasure at the manner in which the leading racket manufacturers have

attended to any suggestions of mine which were made with a view to improving the make of the racket. They have spared no trouble to produce that which I have required, and, indeed, evidently have much more than a mere commercial interest in the matter.

I would not in any way commit myself to an expression of opinion on such a racket as the "Hyde" without giving it a thorough trial, but I feel certain that the racket of the future will be made so that the ball can remain on the face long enough for the racket to "hold" it. Rackets made for Colonial use are strung less tautly than are those for the home market, and the first time I used a racket strung for play in England I thought I had a bit of glass to play with. There was a very imperfect grip for "lift" or "cut." Mr. Thomas J. Tate, the famous racket-maker, quite agrees with me in this matter, and, indeed, makes many of his rackets much "easier" now than do other manufacturers. Others of the leading manufacturers who agree with my views, say that players cannot have them strung too tightly, and so they have to produce a racket which they really do not believe in as being the best for the game. I think it is quite likely that the much greater knowledge and use of rotation, which is apparent in the Colonies, is to some extent due to the slacker stringing of the rackets.

It is an interesting fact that some of the American players when over here found that the rackets with which they produced the "American" service in the United States, would not perform that duty here, and they were compelled to get them re-strung before they could get their service satisfactorily.

THE RELEASE OF THE BALL IN SERVICE

I do not think that any book on the game has ever yet told the beginner how to throw up the ball. I thought this might prove interesting, so I had a few photographs taken of the way to hold the ball and how to part with it.

I thought that this was going perhaps a trifle out of the way, and might think so still, were it not for the fact that the day after the photographs were delivered one of the quartette who fought out the final for the Metropolitan championship doubles, at the recent tournament held at Queen's Club, told me that he thought what spoilt his service was the erratic way in which he threw up the ball. I asked him how he did it, and he assured me that he did not know. Neither do nineteen players out of twenty, and nearly as many do it defectively, especially as regards the position in which the ball ought to be when struck. Nearly all players throw the ball up too far in front of them, and then strike it down. It should be almost above the right ear when struck (for the ordinary over-head service), and just so high that, at full stretch, one can reach it with the centre of the face or blade of the racket.

Most players release the ball by simply opening the thumb and fingers as the hand is thrown upwards. In this release the thumb is travelling straight up

underneath and towards one side of the ball, and the fingers are stretched out and away from it, so that the thumb generally has last contact, and thus directs the ball, which it naturally pushes forward. I watched the player referred to above, and was much struck by his faulty release. I have asked many players how they release the ball, but never found one who knew without experiment. I shall give here examples of how I hold the balls, and how I release them. I do not say they are the best ways, but I find I have complete command of the ball so far as regards placing it in the air, and this may lead to some one showing a better method.

PLATE XIII

HOW I HOLD TWO TENNIS BALLS WHEN SERVING

This plate shows the manner in which the fingers and thumb are distributed in holding two tennis balls. The little finger and the third press the second ball against the palm of the hand and ball of thumb. The thumb and the first and second fingers hold the other ball ready for service.

Although I sometimes use three balls I do not believe in it, as it must to a certain extent interfere with one's accuracy of release. Moreover, there is no necessity for using three if there are ball boys in attendance.



PLATE XIII

HOW I HOLD TWO
TENNIS BALLS WHEN
SERVING



PLATE XIV

BALL LEAVING
FINGERS

PLATE XIV

BALL LEAVING FINGERS

This plate shows clearly how I release the ball. The thumb relaxes its pressure as the hand comes up, and I use the first and second fingers as a guide, rolling the ball swiftly up them until it leaves them on its upward flight at the point shown in the plate, or possibly the fraction of a second sooner, as generally the fingers are, if anything, a trifle closer together. If your own release is satisfactory, do not alter. If it is not, try this method.



PLATE XV

POSITION OF
FINGERS AFTER RELEASE

Plate XV. shows the position of fingers immediately after the release of the first ball, which has escaped the camera.



PLATE XVI

HOW TO HOLD THREE
TENNIS BALLS

PLATE XVI

HOW TO HOLD THREE TENNIS BALLS

I generally hold only two tennis balls at a time when serving, as I think one gets greater accuracy in placing the ball for service by so doing. When I use three I hold them as shown in Plate XVI., and release them as required, as shown in Plate XIV. and described in accompanying letterpress. This may seem a very elementary matter to introduce into a work of this description, but when I have the statement of a player in a quartette such as I have referred to—and who, by the way, for at least the first two sets played the soundest and best game of the four—it rather removes it from the region of superfluity.

STROKES

In this book I do not intend to enter into any elaborate treatment of the game and how it should be played. I have dealt very fully with that in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and where necessary I shall refer by page and figure to that volume. This book is intended to illustrate the methods of our leading Lawn Tennis players, and when I found that a stroke was not fully shown, I sacrificed myself to the extent of filling the breach. Thus, in the American service there were certain positions which I wanted, and found I had not obtained, so I supplied them ; and so with the chop and a few other strokes. In some cases such as the reverse American service, where the stroke is unknown to English players, I have been compelled to illustrate it myself. I have heard of "speaking likenesses." If the photographs in this book are not "loquacious portraits," then I am afraid it will be some time before we get any. In many cases I think the picture might be left to speak for itself, and, unless I see anything specially worthy of remark, I shall practically leave the photograph to tell its own story, merely classifying it.

If I should appear hypercritical in dealing with these strokes it must be remembered that I saw nearly every one of them played, and perfectly remember nearly every shot ; and although of course we all have at times to make our strokes in the most extraordinary positions, I have here selected, in as nearly as possible the right sequence of motion, those strokes which were most perfectly executed, and which are really characteristic of the players' respective styles. Furthermore, I may say that the plates in this volume represent my "pick" of over three hundred fine photographs, all, with the exception of one subject, taken, as is well known to those who were much at Wimbledon this year, under my instructions, or to my "call." With this preamble I shall introduce you to the service.

THE SERVICE

The English first service is, generally speaking, very good, and some of the players possess a first-class second service. R. F. and H. L. Dohertys' and F. Riseley's first are very good, but are not varied enough, especially for their class. R. F. Doherty's second is quite the best I know. George W. Hillyard's first is very fine, and so occasionally is his second, and nearly always he contrives to get a good length, being aided naturally in this by his great height, of which you may see he takes full advantage. G. M. Simond serves a fine length ball and, when he sees fit, sends in a second good enough to compare favourably with anyone's; but the great blemish of the English service is lack of variety. If you were to take Eaves and one or two others away, you would hardly know the difference in playing the rest. It is all too plain, too stereotyped, and must and will soon be altered so that there shall be some variety and "devil" in the "stuff" sent down to the striker-out.

I must mention here, that to anyone not accustomed to the camera, some shots which are really good and successful efforts look like badly played strokes. Particularly is this so in the service, American and otherwise, and in smashes. Sometimes, as the racket is below the ball it gives the impression that the ball is going up. It must be remembered that the racket was in a line with the ball when it hit it, and that it has since fallen, while the ball has gone on its way approximately in the same line of flight, and at nearly the same level as that at which it was hit.



PLATE XVIA
R. F. DOHERTY

SERVING

Note carefully position of feet. Observe that the ball at time of striking will be practically above and in line with the right ear. Doherty throws his ball quite high.



PLATE XVII
R. F. DOHERTY

SERVING

Observe weight thrown back and droop of right shoulder, body sideways on to net, and good position of feet.



PLATE XVIII
R. F. DOHERTY

SERVING

Here you get an excellent idea of the position of the ball with relation to the head. Note position of feet.



PLATE XIX
R. F. DOHERTY

SERVING

Observe position of feet, especially left foot, which is so placed that weight of body is thrown straight on to ball of toe. Note also how extreme reach and height is utilised.



PLATE XX
R. F. DOHERTY

SERVING

Note the angle of racket to forearm, and observe thumb right in front of racket, both characteristics which would be fatal to many, yet do not prevent Doherty producing a very fine service.



PLATE XXI
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISHING SERVICE

Observe how the follow-through is carrying Doherty into his stride for running up.



PLATE XXII
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
SERVICE

One of the rare occasions on which R. F. Doherty finishes across his foot.



PLATE XXIII
R. F. DOHERTY

RUNNING UP
AFTER SERVICE

These two plates, XXII. and XXIII., should be borne in mind when reading later on of footwork.

PLATES XXII AND XXIII

DOHERTY'S SERVICE

Before proceeding to show H. L. Doherty's service it will be interesting to compare the footwork of the brothers. It will be seen in nearly all photographs of myself that my feet are generally at right angles to one another. Nearly always the front foot is pointing to where I want the ball to go and the rear foot is at right angles to it. My theory for this is that generally as your weight is thrown forwards and sideways those are the directions in which you require support, and moreover it comes quite natural for me to so dispose of my pedal extremities. Added to this, I always think that the front foot should be in such a position that the force of executing your stroke shall naturally throw the weight of your body straight down your foot—not across it—on to the ball of your toe, so that you are at once into your stride for the net. An apt illustration of what I mean is given in Plates XXII. and XXIII. In XXII. R. F. Doherty has finished his stroke right across his foot, and does not seem inclined to move. In XXIII. he has finished fairly and truly down his foot, and is into his stride for the net.

It is a characteristic of H. L. Doherty's play that he always both serves and smashes across his left foot in a most peculiar manner. It is bad form, but is only

another argument against getting "hide-bound with theory," for it shows you that a stroke, not executed in the best possible manner theoretically, may yet produce excellent practical results. You must get as near to the most perfect style, theoretically, as suits your particular "build," both mental and physical. On paper this action should retard his start. Fancy getting off the mark for a hundred yards across your foot! It does not, however, seem to have a retarding effect on Doherty, and, as a matter of fact, at the moment of impact in the service he often turns his foot round on the ball of the toe nearly in the direction of his hit.



LATE XXIV
H. L. DOHERTY

SERVING

Here Doherty's characteristic footwork may be seen. Note the position of the ball almost exactly above the right foot.



PLATE XXV
H. L. DOHERTY

SERVING

Notice the position of the left foot, which is largely caused by the grip of the racket necessitating side action.



PLATE XXVI
H. L. DOHERTY

SERVING

This is quite a remarkable instance of characteristic footwork.



PLATE XXVII
H. L. DOHERTY

SERVING

Doherty's service is generally plain or lifted medium pace, but occasionally he introduces a real "scorcher." He does not vary the pace or placing much.



PLATE XXVIII
H. L. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
SERVICE

The camera has caught Doherty with his eyes shut. This will give some idea of the exposure. Note again the extraordinary position of feet, and the apparent checking of the body.



PLATE XXIX
F. L. RISELEY

BEGINNING OF
SERVICE

This looks like a pose. The racket really is in motion, and started quite nine inches back from where it is. Riseley, I think, faces the net too much to get the utmost use of his body-weight.



PLATE XXX
F. L. RISELEY

SERVING

Riseley has one of the finest first services in England. He is still, although halfway through, facing the net.



PLATE XXXI
F. L. RISELEY

SERVING

Riseley's fault is, if anything, that his feet are too close together, and he faces the net too much, which causes lack of body in his stroke.



PLATE XXXII
F. L. RISELEY

SERVICE.
STROKE PLAYED BALL
LEAVING RACKET

Observe how close the feet are together. This is not a good starting position.



PLATE XXXIII
F. L. RISELEY

FINISH OF
SERVICE

It is apparent that the follow-through here has not been energetic enough to bring Riseley into his stride.



PLATE XXXIV
P. A. VAILE

SERVING

Notice the position of the feet, body-weight back, droop of right shoulder, and balance of left arm.



PLATE XXXV
GEORGE W. HILLYARD

SERVING

Note how Hillyard uses every inch of his height, and so produces splendid service of fine length ; also position of feet.



PLATE XXXVI
H. S. MAHONY

SERVING

A fine position, but Mahony seems to me to transfer his weight too soon. Note correct position of feet. Mahony generally, I think, throws his ball up too far in front of him. He has, however, a very good service.



PLATE XXXVII
ANTHONY WILDING

SERVING

The ball is here thrown up a little too far forward.
Position of feet correct.



PLATE XXXVIII
Miss D. K. DOUGLASS

SERVING

The chief fault in Miss Douglass's service and volleying is lack of body, which is clearly shown here.



PLATE XXXIX
MRS. GEORGE W. HILLYARD

SERVING

Mrs. Hillyard has a natural service with good length.



PLATE XL
MISS STAWELL-BROWN

SERVING

Miss Stawell-Brown has a fine strong service and puts plenty of body and swing into it. She keeps a good length.

PLATE XLI

FINISH OF SERVICE

Norris "lies over" the line considerably. Casual observers say he footfaults, but frequently they are incorrect, although he goes scientifically and perilously near it. Norris likes the covered courts. At last championship meeting there he beat Greville, who gave Riseley such a stirring time at Wimbledon, by three sets to one.

Norris achieved his meritorious win chiefly through a very judicious use of the all too little understood "centre theory."

Centre theory is at present practically unknown in England, and his redoubtable opponent did not wake up in time to the game Norris was playing.



PLATE XLI
ANTHONY NORRIS
Editor *Lawn Tennis*
and *Croquet*

FINISH OF
SERVICE



PLATE XLII
C. H. L. CAZALET

SERVING
FORE-HAND CUT
SERVICE

A very fine change service (see Fig. 10, *Modern Lawn Tennis*).



PLATE XLIII
C. H. L. CAZALET

SERVING
FORE-HAND CUT
SERVICE

The stroke has been played, and the racket, having come across from the left, is passing away to the right.



PLATE XLIV
C. H. L. CAZALET

FINISH OF SERVICE
AND INTO STRIDE
FOR THE NET

Cazalet "gets going" very quickly after he has served. Observe the use of the left arm with clenched hand in balancing.



PLATE XLV
G. M. SIMOND

SERVING

A natural service of good pace and length. Simond could do with a little more body in both service and smash. He does not bend back quite enough.



PLATE XLVI
P. A. VAILE

SERVING
CHOP SERVICE

Note position of ball (this service is the same stroke as is explained in Fig. 24, *Modern Lawn Tennis*). The racket hits it glancing downwards and imparts backward vertical spin.



PLATE XLVII
P. A. VAILE

SERVING
CHOP SERVICE

This plate shows the racket glancing down behind the ball, which on bounding keeps very low and has to be played up. Note position of feet.



PLATE XLVIII
MISS THOMSON

SERVING
FORE-UNDERHAND
CUT SERVICE

This is a most useful service. It is fully described in Fig. 12, *Modern Lawn Tennis*. Miss Thomson, as may be seen, delivers it very easily and naturally.



PLATE XLIX
MISS THOMSON

SERVING
FORE-UNDERHAND
CUT SERVICE

The racket passes across the ball from right to left, causing it to revolve and break from left to right, and also to keep very low.



PLATE L
P. DE BORMAN

SERVING
REVERSE OVERHEAD
CUT SERVICE

The racket cuts across the ball (as explained in Fig. 11, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and accompanying letterpress) from right to left.



PLATE LI
P. DE BORMAN

SERVING
REVERSE OVERHEAD
CUT SERVICE

De Borman gets an immense amount of work, and puzzled his opponents at Wimbledon very much. Served easily and naturally, with medium spin, the reverse-overhead is a fine change service—one of the best.

PLATE LII

FINISH OF REVERSE OVERHEAD CUT SERVICE

De Borman, as in all his other strokes, puts too much effort into this very fine service, and naturally produces an excess of rotation. He throws himself across that, which, were he a volleyer, would be his line of passage up to the net. This in itself is technically a great objection, but a most useful modification of this stroke may be obtained with less effort, or, if desired, practically the same rotation may be obtained by a straight hit with the face of the racket held at about an angle of fifty degrees. The usefulness of these services is unquestionable, and it is only the fetish of the unchanged grip which robs English players of them.



PLATE LII
P. DE BORMAN

FINISH OF
REVERSE OVERHEAD
CUT SERVICE



PLATE LIIA
E. G. MEERS

REVERSE OVERHEAD
SERVICE

This service is produced more by the angle of the face of the racket as it goes through the stroke than by any cross cut.



PLATE LIIB
E. G. MEERS

REVERSE OVERHEAD
SERVICE

This is a most characteristic stroke. Meers rarely, if ever, throws his ball any higher than it is seen here. He looks a little like a foot-faulter in this picture.



PLATE LIIC
E. G. MEERS

REVERSE OVERHEAD
SERVICE

Notice how the player has for this stroke shortened his racket. Meers uses an uncommonly small handle.



PLATE LIII
G. C. BALL-GREENE

SERVING
CUT SERVICE

This is practically a cross between a pure chop and the overhead cut service. The racket travels across the ball at an angle of about fifty degrees.



PLATE LIV
G. C. BALL-GREENE

FINISH OF
CUT SERVICE

This is a good change service. It keeps low and must be hit up to get it back over the net. I am afraid there is little doubt about the foot-fault, although, of course, it may have been a perfectly good service.

THE AMERICAN SERVICE

I have very fully described this service in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, in Figs. 13 and 14 and the accompanying letterpress, not to mention the photographs illustrating how it is produced. There seems to be an idea here that there is something difficult about this service. This is quite a mistake. Eaves already does one variety of it very well. Mahony has evidently been practising, and by next season should have a good American service. At present he throws his ball a little too high, much too far in front of him, and not enough to his left. When he has corrected this he has got the American service, and it is unquestionably a most valuable change.

To do it to the best advantage one must, as in all services, use body-weight. As the stroke is up lift, it follows that you must throw your body back, as I show, in order to obtain the necessary impetus for the upward swing. To keep on at this requires better condition than I am in, I may assure you. I regard it as a most valuable change, but I would not keep on at it all the time, because, apart from the fact that it is undoubtedly trying, your man gets accustomed to it. There is no magic in it,—it is merely one of the many spins which you can put on the ball ; and a good player knows the answer to each one, for, as with holds, hits, and the like in wrestling, boxing, or any other

sport, so in Lawn Tennis, each ball has its natural reply or "counter."

I cannot do better than reproduce here the description furnished by me to the *Field*, the leading authority on Lawn Tennis, for the benefit of English players.

This in conjunction with the photographs should make the service quite easy for anyone who can serve any kind of a cut.

*Extracted (by kind permission of the Proprietor) from
The Field of June 4, 1904.*

I call it the "American" service because it is generally so called in England, not that I admit the validity of our cousins' patent, for, to my certain knowledge, there was "prior public user" of it before they mystified English players with the apparently eccentric flight and bound of their deliveries. The leading players of England have admitted to me that the manner of production of this valuable change service is not understood here, and as I never see it used I must assume that this statement is correct, because the stroke certainly possesses sufficient merit to make it well worth the while of any player, who desires to rank as first-class, to acquire it.

The bound of the ball is what has apparently proved the puzzle, for whereas one who did not critically analyse its flight would expect it to break the same way as it is curling in the air, it does just the opposite, and breaks back against (if I may use the term) the direction in which it is going, so that a ball coming from right court to right court may pitch on one's

fore-hand and then break back to his back-hand. This seeming eccentricity is, when the flight of the ball is fully considered, perfectly natural, as I hope will be seen from the following explanation.

It is well known to those who have studied the flight of the ball, even in a casual manner, that the ordinary fore-hand drive, played with a good deal of lift, causes the ball to leave the racket rotating forwardly and downwardly, and on a horizontal axis, so that the rotation is practically purely vertical. To be a little less technical, and to use terms more commonly employed, the ball has pure "top" or forward spin imparted to it. It must not be thought that I am trying to air mechanical terms, and so on. The description I am giving will be perfectly intelligible to anyone possessed of a small amount of mechanical knowledge but without any acquaintance with the game, and my desire is to make this article intelligible to both those who understand tennis terms, and those who do not and yet have sufficient mechanical knowledge to assist them to grasp the principles underlying this service. To many, on the other hand, of course, the terms "top" and "forward spin" will be Greek, yet all tennis players perfectly understand them.

Nearly every player who has seen the stroke played knows that the fore-hand lifting drive, immediately the initial velocity is spent, dives very suddenly for the ground, in fact, so suddenly that the shape of the finish of its flight resembles almost a quarter of a circle. Owing to its sudden descent it gets up almost as suddenly, and, as the forward spin is still on it, it darts forward almost in the shape of the same curve as that

in which it was just before it hit the ground, so that if you constructed the actual line of the passage of the ball through the air of, say, an iron rod curved to exactly represent the flight of the ball, you would have, as representing the flight, a long, slightly curved rod, ending in a quarter of a circle, whose extreme end would rest on the court, and from which, as representing the bound, would spring another quarter-circle. The flight of this ball is in what is called a vertical plane, which means that an imaginary wall without thickness is built up straight from the court, and, of course, at right angles to it, and that all the time the ball is travelling this imaginary wall is cutting it fairly in halves, is bisecting it. The shape of the end of the flight, and also of the bound caused by this particular stroke, must be carefully remembered by those who desire to understand the following illustration of the mechanical effect of the rotation which the "American" service imparts to the ball.

I am going to set up, let us say, on a concrete tennis court, and on one base-line of it, a fly-wheel of an engine, working, as is usual, on a horizontal axle, and spinning, or revolving, taking the action from the top, downwards and forwards towards the other base-line. This is "top spin." Imagine that this fly-wheel is the wheel of a motor-car, and then we shall have the rubber grip. This wheel is now spinning in a vertical plane. If you could instantaneously, say by electricity, sever the axle on each side of the wheel it would not drop straight down. The forward rotation would cause it to jump forward a little, to then suddenly drop, and immediately the spin of the wheel caught the concrete

the wheel would bound up and away with a curved bound, but in the same vertical plane as it was in when it started, for the rotation will keep it in that plane until its strength fails.

Now let us tilt the axle a few inches, so that the wheel leans over a little. Again we sever the supports of the wheel. Will it bound straight as before? Certainly not ; the plane of its line of flight is altered. The imaginary wall is leaning over, and the bound of the motor-car wheel will be in that visionary wall so long as the momentum is left. Now we will raise the axle of the wheel to an angle of 45 degrees, and again let the wheel revolve rapidly and forwardly. The imaginary wall, or the plane of the line of flight, is now leaning right over at an angle of 45 degrees. Again we shear the axle, and this time propel the wheel violently down the court. Imagine it to be facing straight down the half-court line. Remember the imaginary wall is leaning over at an angle. The wheel will leave its bearings lying over at the aforesaid angle, and fly in the plane of its flight, the imaginary wall, rotating forwardly, and approaching the ground at an angle of 45 degrees, for its axis of rotation, or axle, was, it must be remembered, at that angle. Immediately it strikes the ground near the intersection of the service line and the half-court line, and assuming the inclination of the top of the wheel to be towards the receiver's left court, it will, still fighting to remain in its own plane, bound back from the right court to the left. The flight of the ball can hardly be better represented than by a piece of wire or iron, and, pursuing the investigation, it will be found that if this wire flight, when

the ball is revolving on a horizontal axis, is to the fore-hand of the player, when the rotation is at an angle of 45 degrees to the earth, in other words, when the wire flight is pushed over to that angle, the end of the quarter-circle which represents the bound has moved over from the right of the striker out to his left, although the point of contact with the earth remains as before. This is the mechanical explanation of the so-called "American" service, which I might almost as rightfully call the "New Zealand" service.

When our players have learned to throw the ball up further over the left shoulder, and almost in a line with the ear, and to hit upward with a wristy, glancing cut across the ball at an angle of about 45 degrees, they will get the "American" service without any trouble. It is unquestionably a great puzzle to produce unless the theory of the stroke is understood, but, as a matter of fact, follows quite reasonably all the principles governing the flight and bound of cut services. One of the greatest mistakes made by our players in attempting this service is that they carry the racket through the stroke too much, instead of cutting across the ball. Above everything it must be seen that the racket travels upward across the ball at approximately an angle of 45 degrees to 50 degrees. If you get below 45 degrees, then it speedily becomes plain right to left horizontal rotation, which, of course, will not produce the desired bound. The service is really an overhead volley, played with similar lift or rotation to that of the fore-hand drive, but with the racket passing up and across the ball at an angle of approximately 45 degrees, instead of vertically upwards.

I have taken a motor-car wheel to illustrate the mechanical action. With a tennis ball on a grass court the grip on the ground is, of course, relatively much more extensive, for the ball falls on, and to a certain extent sinks into, a soft surface, and is, moreover, compressed by the force of the impact to quite a considerable extent, so that it obtains a strong hold for the influence of the rotation to be exerted from.

The service is a most valuable one, even if only as a change, and I should strongly advise all players who intend to play the game scientifically to acquire it. Many expert players have told me that they cannot get anything like the "work" on their service that the Americans do, even when serving other services with which they are well acquainted. I have observed the very plain nature of the English service. It has exercised me considerably, and after much examination and cogitation I have, I am not sure rightly, ascribed it and the general want of wrist work to the prevalent hold of the racket, of which I may say I entirely disapprove. I think it takes all "snap" out of the volleying and spoils wrist work.

P. A. VAILE



PLATE LV
P. A. VAILE

SERVING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

Note carefully the position of body and racket. The ball, generally speaking, at first should not be thrown up very high.



PLATE LVI
P. A. VAILE

SERVING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

Note the bend of body and how far to the left the ball is thrown up. This position comes naturally after the service is acquired, but should not be "strained" for at first.



PLATE LVII
P. A. VAILE

SERVING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

Note how I am bending right over and under the ball so as to get the "send" of my body upwards and across the ball, as shown in Fig. 14, *Modern Lawn Tennis*.



PLATE LVIII
P. A. VAILE

"AMERICAN" SERVICE
ABOUT TO STRIKE
BALL

Note the angle of racket with face as for lift. This produces greater spin and a more sudden drop of the ball.



PLATE LIX
W. V. EAVES

SERVING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE
ABOUT TO STRIKE BALL

Note the different angle of racket, which yet produces good results. Of course it alters before it strikes the ball, but not much in Eaves' service.



PLATE LX
W. V. EAVES

SERVING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE
BALL LEAVING RACKET

Eaves' actions almost cinematograph in here and make the production of the service very clear. The racket is passing from left to right.



PLATE LXI
W. V. EAVES

FINISHING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

This plate shows the racket still passing across from left to right. In nearly all finishes of this service the plates show the weight on the left foot. This is because the body weight has been exerted upwards, not transferred.



PLATE LXII
W. V. EAVES

FINISHING
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

The racket is passing across from left to right and on downward.



PLATE LXIII
P. A. VAILE

FINISH OF
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

The ball is leaving the racket, and the racket is travelling across from left to right. Observe the similarity between positions in this and following plate.



PLATE LXIV
W. V. EAVES

FINISH OF
"AMERICAN" SERVICE

These pictures of the "American" service have been arranged, as much as possible, in order of action. The direction of the ball must be taken from away on the left side of the server's head ; also, the camera is, of course, lower than the ball.

PLATE LXIV_A

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE. START

This most important service is fully described in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, K, Fig. 14, *H I* and *D E F*, Fig. 13, together with accompanying letterpress. I face the net squarely for this service, and start as shown in order to get a good swing. Prior to the publication of my work I never saw this service used in England. Since then I have seen A. Wilding use it with effect, as mentioned in the Appendix ; but I have not so far seen any English player who can do it. Wilding, when he gets accustomed to it, and puts more body into it, will have a puzzling service.



PLATE LXIVA
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
START



PLATE LXIVb
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
HALF THROUGH STROKE

I swing right across from the position in the preceding plate until my racket reaches the point shown in this plate, then (see next plate)—



PLATE LXIVc
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
HALF THROUGH STROKE

The head of the racket falls like an Indian club doing a turn until it gets down to the position shown in the next plate.



PLATE LXIVd
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
FULL EXTENT OF
DOWNWARD SWING

When the racket gets down so far as is shown in this plate, the body should, if anything, be bent sideways more to the right than is illustrated in the picture, so as to get body weight into the stroke *upwards*, which is all-important.



PLATE LXIV
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
FULL EXTENT OF
DOWNWARD SWING

This plate is practically the same as the preceding one, but is taken along the base line to show the action, and the relative positions of body and ball from this point of view.



PLATE LXIV
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
UPWARD PART OF STROKE

PLATE LXIV_FREVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE. STARTING UPWARD
STROKE

Here, the preliminary swing having furnished the necessary momentum, the upward stroke is started. Note the position of the face of the racket. Before the ball is struck the angle of the face of the racket is altered, so that at the moment of impact it is "cutting" up and across from right to left. This stroke may, until one becomes expert at it, be practised with this position as the *start* of the service. As the stroke is carried upwards, the side of the racket further from the base-line is turned upwards more than it is when in this position. The racket thus hits the ball with nearly a vertical face. See *Modern Lawn Tennis*, K, Fig. 14, *H I*.



PLATE LXIV
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
FINISH

The service in the last plate has been delivered, and the racket has naturally come up and across from right to left, finishing as shown.



PLATE LXIVh
P. A. VAILE

REVERSE AMERICAN SERVICE
FINISH

One might quite reasonably ask why in this finish the arm is *behind* the head, but few would guess. The reason is, that this service was delivered with a *high lifting drive* instead of an upward hit. The service may be effectively delivered thus, but I prefer the other method.



PLATE LXIV
E. G. MEERS

WAITING FOR
SERVICE

Messrs. Meers and Baddeley's photographs were taken after the blocks were put in hand. If I had had this one I think I could have dispensed with Plate LXIV κ . The positions are almost the same. The letterpress of Plate LXIV κ will in the main apply to this.



PLATE LXIVJ
WILFRED BADDELEY

WAITING FOR
SERVICE

Baddeley is very active in getting to the service although he stands with his knees very straight. His return is generally good.



PLATE LXIV
P. A. VAILE

WAITING FOR
SERVICE

PLATE LXIV_K

WAITING FOR THE SERVICE

This is a most important and, by Tennis writers, much neglected position. Plate LXIV_K will serve quite well to explain the chief points I wish to illustrate. In making, or preparing to make, any stroke you must not get fixed. R. F. Doherty sometimes does quite a little dance before the service leaves his opponent's racket, throwing his weight from side to side, foot to foot, until he settles down for his stroke, and thus practically illustrating the importance of my remarks about transference of weight at p. 24, *Modern Lawn Tennis*.

The main essentials in this position are :

1. To be far enough back to play an effective stroke at the earliest possible moment without retiring.
2. To be in such a position that you can start quickly forward to the ball.

The first must be a matter for your own judgment.

The second requires possibly a little more elucidation. The weight of the body should be thrown well forward, very near to the point of overbalancing you. The knees should be flexed as shown. You cannot start from a stiff limb. If it is stiff it must be flexed, and then extended before it will start you. In the

position shown you save, after the service is delivered, the time required for the first action. The weight should be distributed across the feet in a line with the balls of the big toes. I don't want you to tire yourself by standing on tiptoes, or any nonsense of that kind. Your heels may be relieving your instep of the strain if you like, but the main portion of your weight must be concentrated at the "starting point," which is the ball of the toe. I always hold my racket with the back-hand grip and support it at the splice, as shown in the plate. I always endeavour to keep up some movement of the body, and, as a matter of fact, it will be seen on looking at the photograph closely that I am doing a little terpsichorean work myself, for my right foot is raised from the ground ; it is apparently an anxious moment for me, but if you attend to the main essentials of this important position you will probably get through your stroke without undue worry.

These essentials are :

1. Be far enough back, as already mentioned.
2. Have the knees flexed.
3. Have the shoulders and body thrown forward.
4. Have most of your weight concentrated at, and across in a line with, the balls of your big toes.
5. Grip your racket as shown, or in such a position as to be ready for your weakest stroke.

It is not necessary, unless you feel that you get the best result by so doing, to crouch quite so much as I am doing. I generally do so, and find I can start more quickly by so doing. This I suppose is natural, as

the position mechanically is akin, in a slight degree, to the start for a modern sprint, where a portion of the weight is actually thrown on to the hands.

In this position you practically face the server with feet pointed outwards as shown. You are thus ready directly you see the line of the ball to move on to it, or, if such movement be unnecessary, to swing into position with your side towards it so that you may make an effective stroke.

Before I leave this subject I must make a few remarks about the delivery and return of the American and other heavily cut services.

As I have already mentioned, the American service is obtained by an upper-cut or lift, similar to that imparted by the fore-hand drive, but at a different angle. It follows that in all cut strokes the body-weight must be to a considerable extent thrown across the intended line of the player's run. It will be seen, therefore, that in some of the cut services it is a disadvantage to strive for an excessive cut, for by so doing, even if you produce the service successfully, you to a certain extent overbalance yourself and make your start for the net very slow. This will be clearly seen from the photograph of de Borman's finish of the reverse overhead service. In nearly every case his finish is so excessive that he would, were he a volleyer, find himself seriously handicapped in getting away for the net after his service. It should be an easy matter for him to moderate this cross action; then he is possessed of one of the finest services in the game.

While I am on the subject of the reverse overhead service I may mention that I did not see a single service

delivered by this means, during the All-England Championship meeting just concluded, except those which came off de Borman's racket. Considering what a valuable service it is, here was surely food for thought. As a matter of fact, this service is practically an impossibility for the slaves of the fetish of the unchanged grip. This alone should be sufficient to condemn this utterly absurd notion. A man may require any one of eight or ten grips. Let him take the one which suits him for the time and the stroke.

As regards the return of the American service, I may say that once the principles of its bound are mastered (see Fig. 13, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) it is no more trouble to deal with than any other cut service. It is positively ridiculous to see players shaping at this service fore-handed, then suddenly making a frantic half-pirouette and taking, or missing, the return on the back-hand. The best way, until you are perfectly at home with it, is to allow for its bound and take it on the fore-hand. You can do this the same as with any other cut service. For instance, take the service A B C, Fig. 13, *Modern Lawn Tennis*. If you stand on the side-line you will find yourself caught between two fires, if you are new to the service. Instead of doing this, stand out at C or beyond, and play the service with confidence and *lift*; ¹ for it already has lift—at a slight angle, certainly, but lift nevertheless—on it. Or you may play it effectively with a similar stroke to H. L. Doherty's fore-hand, which generally passes across that portion of the ball nearer to him than the

¹ In the flight and bound, A B C, Fig. 13, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, referred to above, the drawing is not to scale.

centre, and with a certain amount of drag or draw. When once you have mastered what this or any other service is doing in the air, it is easy to know how to kill the "devil" in the ball by a contending rotation. When you know this, you may stand in and deal with the service confidently and vigorously, feeling that the work is helping rather than beating you. (Fig. 20, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and letterpress.)

Before closing I shall give a list of services which should be in the repertory of every player :

1. Ordinary overhead service.
2. Fore-hand overhead cut service.
3. Reverse overhead cut service.
4. Pure chop service.
5. Overhead lifting service (similar to Mahony's).
6. "American" service, ordinary (left to right swing).
7. "American" reverse service (right to left swing).

I cannot call to mind a player in England who uses three of these, and the very great majority have only one—the first, which is the rudimentary effort of a beginner, although, with plenty of pace and judicious placing, still a good one.

I read somewhere the other day that Dr. Grace and K. S. Ranjitsinhji say that the difference between the club bowler and the star is not so much the matter of length as is it the ability to whip off the pitch, the ability to impart "devil" to the ball. I do not know if they were correctly reported, but it will do for my purposes. I say that the scientific player of Lawn Tennis of the future will be distinguished from the plain ball-hitter not

THE FORE-HAND STROKE

This stroke is, or should be, the foundation of every player's game, but I am sorry to say that of England's players there are very few who can be said to possess a fine fore-hand. This is, I think, to a large extent due to the bad grip and also an apparent want of appreciation of the great value of the fore-hand drive described by me in *Modern Lawn Tennis* and illustrated by diagram in Figs. 15 and 21. This is, without the very slightest shadow of doubt, the most valuable ground stroke in modern Lawn Tennis, yet I cannot call to mind a player in England who has a complete command of it. De Borman, the Belgian champion, who rarely plays a perfect stroke, afforded a series of object-lessons to the Englishmen on the value of this and other strokes wherein rotation is produced. Everything he did was exaggerated and done with a great loss of energy, yet to those capable of learning there was instruction in every stroke. I shall refer to his game later on. S. H. Smith and A. W. Gore are generally looked upon as England's fore-hand drivers. Personally, I should place George W. Hillyard quite with, if not before them. There is not in England anything in the way of a fore-hand drive to beat Hillyard's by much. His great

height enables him to take it very high up, and he gets the ball at the top of its bound and sweeps it down into the opposite court at a great pace and at almost any angle he desires. Speaking generally, however, of the fore-hand drive, the great blemish is the want of appreciation of the virtue of lift ; the ball is not made to find the base-line in the remarkable manner which characterises a good modern fore-hand drive with the right amount of lift. De Borman's exaggerated drive, which looked many times as though it would pitch six feet out of court, and then dived suddenly six feet in, should be an eloquent appeal to those who do not use the proper stroke, to acquire it without delay.

At page 108 in *Modern Lawn Tennis* I write : " Many players, in fact most, do not take full advantage of the facilities offered by the lifting drives for sharp cross-court shots." De Borman gave the players of England an example of what I mean. It was quite amusing to see his ball come humming egg-shaped across the net, bound apparently for a yard outside the court, and to see it allowed time and again, by an experienced player like Cazalet, to drop on to the side-line and escape him.

These sharp cross-court shots are much neglected in the English double. They are well and scientifically played in Australia, and I notice that Eaves does them better than anyone here. I do not, of course, say he learned them in Australia. His shot, however, is a sharp cross-court cut, but the shot I speak of is much quicker off the racket, drops more quickly and keeps closer to the net. It is de Borman's fore-hand drive, but played easily and naturally without any effort—just

a nice little upward wrist flick, and the thing is done prettily, effectively, and without undue exertion. It is the finished statue produced from de Borman's lump of marble. I know he will excuse my metaphor or whatever it really is. It is a shot the English player must and will have ; but he must quite give up the idea of treating the rotation of the ball as a mere theory or beneath notice, or he will soon be badly beaten.



AGE LXV
F. DOHERTY

FORE-HAND STROKE
FULL BACK SWING

R. F. Doherty scarcely changes his grip for the fore-hand shot. His thumb lies across and down the face of the racket, at times, most the same as in his back-hand stroke, yet most of his strokes are naturally produced and are full of ease and precision. Note correct position of feet: weight about to be transferred, but, as shown by lifted left toe, action not yet complete: weight on ball of right foot and heel of left.



PLATE LXVI
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND STROKE

A characteristic finish, possibly not the best form, but producing excellent results. Note position of feet, which is correct so far as regards line.

The following pictures form almost a cinematographic record of S. H. Smith's famous drive. It is essentially in bad form, as the weight is transferred and resting on the left leg long before the ball is struck, so that manifestly the drive is obtained from a very "set" position and from mere loin rotation and arm swing. Again, however, against theory, the result is excellent, but we do not know how much better it would be if correctly played.



PLATE LXVII
S. H. SMITH

FORE-HAND DRIVE
FULL EXTENT OF
BACK SWING

Note that the arm and racket from elbow are (as advocated by me) in one straight line. See correct position of left foot. The weight is prematurely transferred. The right shoulder is not swung back enough.



FIG. LXVIII
J. SMITH

FORE-HAND DRIVE
FULL SWING BACK

This is a better shot, as the main faults are less exaggerated. The position of the feet is good. Racket-end to elbow is straight for sweep shot. The right shoulder is well back and is balanced by the left shoulder and arm.



PLATE LXIX
S. H. SMITH

FORE-HAND DRIVE
OFF BALL AT TOP OF BOUND

A thoroughly typical stroke and one of Smith's best. The result of this shot generally leaves nothing to cavil at.



PLATE LXX
S. H. SMITH

FORE-HAND DRIVE

This is quite a “personal” shot and cannot be recommended to a learner. I can get all the pace that Smith does out of a drive, with much less effort, by timing the body on to the ball. This is a point of the utmost importance, yet it is woefully neglected.



PLATE LXXI
S. H. SMITH

FORE-HAND DRIVE
BALL LEAVING RACKET

PLATE LXXI

FORE-HAND DRIVE—BALL LEAVING RACKET

This is a very good stroke. The feet are right and the balance of body is good. The racket is ascending slightly, and so is producing a slight amount of lift. A slightly more sudden ascension of the racket would produce more lift and render Smith's drive safer. As it is, he drives so close to the net that when he is off his game, *he is off*.



PLATE LXXII
S. H. SMITH

FINISHING
FORE-HAND STROKE

A typical sweep, showing racket moving away and up as the ball goes straight down court, and not, as it appears to be doing, across court. When it was hit the racket was behind it. It has not changed its line—the racket has.



PLATE LXXIII
S. H. SMITH

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

This is a good natural finish. Observe the ball in motion.



PLATE LXXIV
S. H. SMITH

FORE-HAND DRIVE

PLATE LXXIV

FORE-HAND DRIVE

Note the bent arm. The weight here is more on the right foot than in other plates. This is Smith's alternative fore-hand, in which the racket passes across the ball between the player and the ball. It is very effective played from back-hand court to back-hand across court. This stroke is fully described at pp. 68 and 69, *Modern Lawn Tennis*.



PLATE LXXV
S. H. SMITH

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE
IN PLATE LXXIV

It will be seen that here the body-weight is not thrown so violently forward. It is more evenly distributed and a very fine shot is played. The finish is across the body and high up on the left side.



PLATE LXXVI
GEORGE W. HILLYARD

FORE-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE

This is Hillyard's favourite, a high-bounding ball, and the result is second to none. Notice that the racket, as with all good fore-hand drivers, is in line with the forearm.



PLATE LXXVII
GEORGE W. HILLYARD

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE FROM
BASE-LINE, LEFT COURT

This is one of Hillyard's best shots. He plays it with great pace and precision, and follows up well. Note position of feet.



PLATE LXXVIII
A. W. GORE

FORE-HAND DRIVE

Gore plays a fine fore-hand stroke. It will be seen that he holds the racket as I advocate. He prefers a moderately high-bounding ball, but negotiates others with great success.



PLATE LXXIX
A. W. GORE

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

Notice the position of feet, and particularly that the racket and the arm from the elbow are in the same straight line—in my opinion, the only proper hold for the fore-hand strokes.



PLATE LXXX
F. L. RISELEY

FORE-HAND DRIVE

Riseley here is playing with a much longer swing back than usual. The weight is between the feet, but the length of his swing, and good follow through, will, to a certain extent, counteract this.



PLATE LXXXI
F. L. RISELEY

FORE-HAND DRIVE

This is quite a characteristic stroke. The swing back is so short that the drive, although a graceful shot, partakes of the nature of a push. Pace is sacrificed, of course, but Riseley considers that the short swing conceals the shot more. It is a doubtful advantage.



PLATE LXXXII
F. L. RISELEY

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

A fine natural shot with good body-swing, clean *follow* through, and no locking of the left shoulder as is so common in England.



PLATE LXXXIII
M. J. G. RITCHIE

FORE-HAND DRIVE

The legs are here spread so wide and the weight is already so adjusted that it is manifest much power will be lost.



PLATE LXXXIV
M. J. G. RITCHIE

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

Here we see the locking of the left shoulder which deprives a fore-hand shot of much of its sting. The left shoulder should go back as the right comes forward, as in Plate LXXXII.



PLATE LXXXV
P. DE BORMAN

FORE-HAND DRIVE
BEGINNING OF
STROKE

This is a most characteristic attitude and gives a watchful opponent plenty of notice to expect a drive.



PLATE LXXXVI
P. DE BORMAN

DRIVE PLAYED
BALL LEAVING
RACKET

This plate shows the suddenly ascending racket which produces the excessive rotation that de Borman gets.



PLATE LXXXVII
P. DE BORMAN

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

This plate shows how the racket passes suddenly and sharply up and across the player's body.



PLATE LXXXVIII
W. C. CRAWLEY

FORE-HAND DRIVE
OFF HIGH-
BOUNDING BALL

Crawley plays a fine shot off this ball. He is a promising player. He beat S. H. Smith in the Singles Championship of Northumberland.



PLATE LXXXIX
P. A. VAILE

FORE-HAND
LIFTING DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE

Note the position of the feet, the bend of the left knee sideways—as in golf—to secure extra body swing, good swing back, also balance of left arm.



PLATE XC
P. A. VAILE

**FORE-HAND LIFTING
DRIVE FROM BASE-LINE
STROKE PLAYED**

Note the transference of weight, which, although the stroke is played and the ball has left the racket rolled out of shape by the lift, is not yet completed. The remarkable effect of this stroke on the ball is here very clearly shown.



PLATE XCI
C. H. L. CAZALET

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

Here we see again the locking of the left shoulder consequent on the left arm not being allowed to swing back as the right comes forward.



PLATE XCII
ANTHONY WILDING

**FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE**

PLATE XCII

FINISH OF FORE-HAND DRIVE FROM BASE-LINE

Wilding is a very promising player. He has a fine fore-hand drive which could do with a little more lift. The line behind him is an old croquet line. Very few players clench the left hand. I believe in doing so lightly. It gives more "intention" and tension to the arm, which then performs its function of balancing more perfectly.

Wilding does not time his body on to the ball too well, and he is rather inclined to trust to the strength of his arm; also he very frequently gets too close laterally to his ball.



PLATE XCIII
P. A. VAILE

STRAIGHT FORE-HAND
DRIVE OFF LOW BALL

A shot rarely seen in England, yet in its place a beautiful and effective stroke. The ball is taken low down close to the right leg. Weight here seems transferred much too soon, but vigorous follow through, as shown in next plate, to some extent counteracts this.



PLATE XCIV
P. A. VAILE

STRAIGHT FORE-HAND
DRIVE
FINISH OF STROKE

Played with a good swing and clean follow through, the racket naturally goes right up and the stroke throws you into your stride. Note arm balance.



PLATE XCV
MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

PLAYING FORE-HAND
DRIVE WITH FULL
SWING

Note position of feet, which is good. Miss Douglass generally hits the ball on the side nearer to her, producing a stroke something like S. H. Smith's alternative fore-hand.



PLATE XCVI
MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

This picture shows the locking of left shoulder consequent on defective arm and body work. The weight, instead of going forward and throwing the player into her step, has gone across and is retarding her start.



PLATE XCVII
MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

This is a better finish, as Miss Douglass is getting into position naturally after the stroke.



PLATE XCVIII
MISS W. A. LONGHURST

FORE-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE

Miss Longhurst has a fine fore-hand. Note her natural hold, and that the racket is in a line with the forearm.



PLATE XCVIII
MISS W. A. LONGHURST

FORE-HAND DRIVE
STROKE PLAYED
AND BALL LEAVING
RACKET

This looks like a somewhat cramped shot, but Miss Longhurst gets some of her best strokes from this position.



PLATE XCVIIIb
E. G. MEERS

"Give me a man that we may
fight together."

FORE-HAND
DRIVE

PLATE XCVIII_B

FORE-HAND DRIVE

Meers is full of apt "Shakespearian" quotations, and when he saw this picture expressed his idea of it in the sentence beneath it. It is quite appropriate, but, considering that I was on the other side of the net, not very complimentary to me. Probably he overlooked this. Note good swing back, racket and arm in same line, and balance of left arm.

This was my first experience of a racket strung for play in England, and I could not induce the ball to stay on the racket long enough for me to "feel" it.

It is almost an impossibility for any player to satisfactorily produce many of the finest strokes in the game with a racket strung up to its limit of tension as are so many.

PLATE XCVIIIc

FINISH OF FORE-HAND DRIVE

This is another most appropriate quotation. The plate shows a fine vigorous finish, quite a lesson to most players. Here is no checking of the body and locking of the left shoulder. The stroke has been played with full body weight, which is thrown straight down the left foot, the right shoulder has come forward, the left has swung back as it should, the follow through is good, and the force of the stroke is swinging Meers into his stride for the net.



PLATE XCVIIIc
E. G. MEERS

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, FINISH OF
do it with thy might." FORE-HAND DRIVE



PLATE XCVIII
HERBERT BADDELEY

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND DRIVE

This is a fine natural shot, with weight well down left foot and left shoulder back as the stroke is made.

THE BACK-HAND GROUND STROKES

This is a very weak point with English players, as considering the grip of the racket it may well be. A straight back-hand is almost unknown. Caridia gets on to his very sweetly, and produces a beautiful crisp shot. He gets good weight on to his stroke, and follows through straight, as will be seen from the photographs of his finish of the back-hand drive. I did not notice particularly during actual play how Caridia held his racket, but I knew from the way the ball left it that he could not be using the English grip for his back-hand. I asked him later to show me his hold, and found, as I expected, that he has the grip advocated by me on his back-hand ; and certainly no English player that I can call to mind is so severe on his back-hand volleys at the net or gets so clean a back-hand shot. I did not think of asking him about his fore-hand, but am afraid that in this he uses an approximation to the English grip. If he had not been doing so, I think I should have noticed the different way in which the ball would have left the racket.

There is not much muscle in the English back-hand—there absolutely cannot be—and the stroke is practically played by pure swing right across the body. H. S. Mahony has a good back-hand, but under-cuts, if I may use the term, nearly every ball. This, of course,

produces the rotation of the chop stroke which is quite undesirable in a standard stroke, and, considering how much safer, more graceful, and more effective lift generally is, I cannot see any reason why a player of his ability should not use it. We have much finer back-hand strokes in Australasia than anything I see here, and shall continue to have them so long as the present defective hold is adhered to in this country.

I cannot call to mind a back-hand except Caridia's—and his ground strokes, although clean and fast, are not, usually speaking, very severe—with any “devil” in it. R. F. Doherty plays a fine stroke, but no man living could produce a perfect back-hand drive with his hold. With my ordinary straight back-hand drive I will get much greater pace with less effort, and with the horizontal back-hand drive played with a little lift should, I think, get about twice the pace of anything I have seen him produce.

This is not “brag.” It simply amounts to this, that especially on the back-hand the English player thinks he knows better how to use his arm than the architect and designer thereof. Naturally he is mistaken. He is putting the machine on to motions it was not intended for. I try to use my arm so as to get the greatest possible power from its muscles with the least expenditure of energy. So does Caridia, whose racket is braced across his wrist-joint and works in a line with his forearm. He gives a good object lesson, and if anyone wants another I shall be pleased to furnish it.

If Caridia had a little more lift in his back-hand, and was not so devoted to the half-volley, I should expect to see him play a very fine length fast back-hand drive

from the base-line ; but who does this in England ? “Search me !” as the American says—which being construed, means that I have not the name of the player concealed about me.

As a matter of fact there is not amongst the players of the United Kingdom a back-hand which I would place as first-class in comparison with those I am accustomed to, on consideration of these points : 1. Length ; 2. Pace ; 3. Placing ; 4. Command of the ball by production of rotation, which with a racket is equivalent to the finger-grip of an expert bowler at cricket.

I am hoping that by this time my readers will, with the very kind assistance of nearly every paper which has reviewed *Modern Lawn Tennis*, have come to the conclusion that I really do know the game fairly well. I am emphasising this here because I was actually asked by a player, “Do you really think what you put in your book about the Dohertys’ play ?”

Now, I know perfectly well that he did not mean to be offensive, and as I always consider the intention the gist of the crime, I duly and solemnly assured him that I certainly did. I did not consider it necessary to tell him that, in my humble opinion, any man who, in a book on sport, could depreciate another man’s play without the sincerest conviction that he was right in his criticisms, was—well, too poor-spirited to waste words on.

Modern Lawn Tennis was, as is well known to most players, produced in a very short time. For many years I had threatened to write a book on the subject, but had always procrastinated. On this occasion I was criticising somewhat freely, as unfortunately is my

habit, the methods of play, and when my friend told me that if I thought I could teach the Tennis players of the world to do any better I should do so, I recognised an old friend of mine, a maxim which tells me never to find fault unless I think I can indicate the better way.

I said, "Consider it done," and *Modern Lawn Tennis* was written in a few days and rushed through the press to be in time for Wimbledon.

I am mentioning this to show that I had not made any preparation for the book, and so had to rely entirely on my memory for everything. This did not trouble me so far as regards the game, but when dealing with "personalities" I must say I like a few notes taken during actual play. You will wonder what this is all about, but if you have patience you will see presently.

It will be remembered that I dealt with some of the leading characteristics of the most prominent players, and naturally enough the Messrs. Doherty came in for a large share of attention. Are they not Champions of the World, and brother authors?

Treating the subject as suddenly as I did, it would not have surprised me, and certainly would not have troubled me, if I had had to modify, or possibly retract, some of the criticisms which I then wrote. One of the greatest causes of satisfaction which I have in connection with *Modern Lawn Tennis* is that I do not want to take back a word of it. I have seen the Wimbledon meeting through since then, and I can say it "all and more so" over again; and I am glad it is so, for if I had even unwittingly unjustly depreciated the merits of a

good sportsman and a fine player it would hurt me much more than it would him.

In dealing with the Champions of the World I had little hesitation in criticising them more freely, if anything, than those of lesser degree. It is one of the penalties of success ; and I have seen so much unreasoning adulation bestowed upon their game that I should think it was nearly time I found some mustard for the beef. Moreover, I felt perfectly certain, as has proved the case, that the players of England were sufficiently satisfied with their position in the Tennis world not to be annoyed at my rather sweeping criticisms of the game. Indeed, I have no hesitation in saying that nothing could exceed the sportsmanlike and considerate manner in which the leading players of the United Kingdom have received—and dealt with—my efforts to improve the game.

I hope, therefore, that no one will consider it necessary to ask me if I mean anything I may herein say when dealing with a player's game.

Not only have I nothing to retract, but my convictions of the correctness of my criticisms are more strongly rooted than ever,—and there are many other points in connection with our Champions' play which are of great interest to the scientific student of Lawn Tennis. These, however, I do not think it necessary to go fully into, but one of them is of such interest that I may be pardoned for mentioning it here.

If I were to say to any person who follows Lawn Tennis, "H. L. Doherty puts no body into his smash," I should probably be regarded as a lunatic ; yet such is the fact. It seems quite ridiculous to think that this stroke is

obtained almost entirely from the arm and wrist, yet such is the case ; and the strangest part of it is, that, as is well known, the avoirdupois behind it is not excessive.

Doherty's stroke and the manner of its execution puzzled me a good deal. The peculiar position of his feet first drew my attention to it. I knew that if I smashed that way I should throw myself clean across my foot, so I concluded his weight must stop almost immediately he struck the ball, if not before. As a matter of fact it does not generally get there. I have had many photographs of H. L. Doherty's smash ; six of them, all most life-like pictures, I give here. Not only the Messrs. Doherty but indeed all players of note have been more than kind in the assistance they have rendered in this manner, and I have little doubt the game will be benefited.

I found that I could never get H. L. Doherty following his stroke through with his body. Strangely enough, although he puts plenty of body into his service he rather seemsto hang off his smash, as will be seen in Plates CLV., CLVI., CLVII., and CLVIII. Plate CLIV. is the only plate which shows any appearance of body. I remarked this peculiarity of his smash to Doherty, and told him I wanted to get a photograph of him putting his weight into it. He seemed to think the result would be the same, but we made the experiment, and Plate CLIV. (a really fine bit of photographic timing) is the result. Here you can actually see the weight coming on to the foot in front, and the body, instead of hanging off the ball, is bending forward.

Of course it must be remembered that many of

THE BACK-HAND GROUND STROKES 173

Doherty's best smashes are played running back, and then, as so few players even poise themselves, let alone stop and advance, the effect in a photograph must necessarily be that of hanging off the stroke ; but even in Plate CLV., where he has played the shot running on to it, the same action is apparent.

Doherty tells me that he plays this stroke with a loose wrist ; and there cannot be any doubt that there is much more arm and wrist in it than body. This to me is very strange, for I rarely find a man who does not carry his service into his smash, and Doherty certainly uses his body well in his service.

I may say at once that I "really mean all this." I have no desire to depreciate the stroke, which is one of the very finest. It is to me quite an interesting shot, although both as regards body, left arm, and feet I should say it could be played in better form.

You may retort by saying, "What is the good of your theory? You say everything he does is wrong, yet look at the result."

My answer would be, "Do you know what the result would be if he played his smash in perfect form?" I certainly do not. It might not be half so good. And this one shot is most valuable to me in giving point again to my solemn warning, "Don't get hide-bound with theory."

As a matter of fact, there is generally one way, as regards your position, timing, place of contact with the ball, and angle of the racket, in which it is absolutely best to deal with any return. That is your way always, if you can get it ; and if you can get it with everything natural, and right, and comfortable, of course it is only

common-sense to play the stroke that way. There may be half-a-dozen other ways which will produce nearly as good results, and, if the theoretically perfect way doesn't suit you nicely, take the nearest practical way. "Don't become the slave of the book." Like fire, it is a good servitor but a most uncomfortable master.

I really do not know how this dissertation on smashing has crept into the back-hand corner, but it cannot do any harm here, so I shall let it remain.

It may possibly be taken as an instance to show how my theory has become second nature. I saw these smashes looming up and "lobbed to the back-hand," which is nearly always sound Tennis.

The English back-hand stroke may, generally speaking, be said to be a defensive one. Many Colonial players get as much pace on the back-hand as on the fore-hand, and play winning strokes with equal facility on either hand.

The English stroke is a weak, unnatural one, and should be altered.



PLATE XCIX
A. W. GORE

ABOUT TO PLAY A
BACK-HAND STROKE

This is not Gore's strongest point, but I think he has improved in it since last season. Note the position of feet.



PLATE C
R. B. HOUGH

BACK-HAND RETURN
FROM BASE-LINE

Hough has quite a useful back-hand. Note the position of the body, which is sideways on to stroke.



PLATE CI
F. L. RISELEY

PLAYING BACK-
HAND DRIVE

This is a fine, natural shot. Riseley's back-hand has certainly improved considerably during the last year.

These two plates form quite a remarkable instance of accurate timing in photography. Note position of feet.



PLATE CII
F. L. RISELEY

PLAYING BACK-
HAND STROKE

PLATE CII

PLAYING BACK-HAND STROKE

I wanted exactly this position, and asked Mr. Beldam to obtain it. To make sure of it he took two shots (Plate CI. and this one). The casual observer would see no difference in the pictures. Closer examination will show how remarkable was the timing by the photographer, for they are two entirely different exposures, as may clearly be seen.



PLATE CIII
H. L. DOHERTY

BACK-H
STROKE

This is a fine position for a back-hand stroke. Doherty stepping across to intercept the return. Note position of head and body "sideways on" to net.



TYPE CIV
H. L. DOHERTY

BACK-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE

This is a stroke H. L. Doherty does not use frequently, for he rarely allows the ball to land when he can conveniently prevent it. He is, however, very accurate, but does not get a great amount of pace.



PLATE CIVA
H. L. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND DRIVE

The stroke has just been played. The ball may be seen leaving the racket, and the racket swinging round across the body of player.



F. CV
A. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND DRIVE

PLATE CV

FINISH OF BACK-HAND DRIVE

This is one of those pictures which look like poses, instead of, as it is, the natural finish of a well-played stroke. These plates, which appear to be poses, show the fidelity of the photographs, for the beginning and the finish of the strokes are, of course, the positions in which there is least motion:



PLATE CVI
H. L. DOHERTY

BACK-HAND
STROKE

Doherty is here finishing a back-hand drive from beyond the base-line.



PLATE CVII
H. L. DOHERTY

BACK-HAND
STROKE

Doherty is here playing a low back-hand from beyond the base-line. The line on which he stands is not a court-marking.



CVIII
DOHERTY

BACK-HAND
DRIVE

This is a fine characteristic stroke. Doherty is stepping across to ball, so that by the time he strikes it he will have the benefit of swing. Note carefully position of feet and body, with back almost to the net.



PLATE CIX
R. F. DOHERTY

BACK-HAND
DRIVE

This is another characteristic stroke. Note how the body is turned away from the net so as to give full swing for the stroke.



PLATE CX
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISHING BACK-
HAND STROKE

In this stroke the racket is swept round and upwards, producing a fair amount of lift.



PLATE CXI
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISHING BACK
HAND STROKE

This is a fine, free finish to a back-hand drive across court.



PLATE CXII
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND DRIVE

This plate shows very clearly how R. F. Doherty gets his back-hand drive. It is practically by loin rotation and semicircular swing, as the position of the right leg and foot, and also his hold, prohibit straight follow through.



PLATE CXIII
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND DRIVE

This is almost the same as Plate CXII., and again we see the weight thrown clean across the front leg and foot. It is, however, a graceful and telling stroke, and, though not possessed of much sting, is distinctly good.



PLATE CXIV
W. LEMAIRE

BACK-HAND
DRIVE

Lemaire, one of Belgium's representatives at the recent All-England Championship meeting, is one of the very few players who plays a straight back-hand with clean follow through. He does it very well, too.



PLATE CXV
W. LEMAIRE

BACK-HAND DRIVE
FINISH

This is quite a characteristic stroke, and I think Lemaire's best at present. The position of feet and transference of weight are good.



PLATE CXVI
M. J. G. RITCHIE

BACK-HAND
DRIVE

This is a fine natural stroke played in good form, certain, but not very severe. It will be seen that Ritchie here has the racket braced across the wrist-joint, and he tells me that he always uses the grips advocated by me on both hands.



PLATE CXVII
W. C. CRAWLEY

BACK-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE LINE

Here we apparently have Crawley with the wrong leg in front, but he really is shown stepping on to the ball, and by the time it was played the position was correct.



PLATE CXVIII
H. S. MAHONY

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE

(See page 199.)



PLATE CXIX
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND
HORIZONTAL DRIVE
WITH LIFT

(See page 200.)

PLATE CXVIII

FINISH OF BACK-HAND DRIVE FROM BASE-LINE

Mahony puts plenty of weight into this stroke, which would, I think, be fifty per cent. better if he would play it with lift instead of under-cut or back rotation, which tends to send it over the base-line. Note the good position of body and feet, the balance of arms, and the lightly-clenched left hand, which I consider quite an important point.

Mahony never plays this stroke with a good follow through. It is really a cross between pure under-cut or backward rotation, combined with a draw across the ball, as may be seen by his finish.

This plate was actually described by one Tennis writer—much to the amusement of players—as “the finish of Mahony’s fore-hand drive”!

PLATE CXIX

BACK-HAND HORIZONTAL DRIVE, WITH LIFT

In this stroke the racket is swept round with great force, almost horizontally, but with slight upward movement at moment of impact, to impart lift. The ball is struck at the top of the bound, or before if it is a suitable return. This is a beautiful and useful stroke, and easy to acquire.

Great pace and lift may be obtained by modifying this stroke so as to cut up across the ball more. It is one of the most valuable back-hand strokes, and is, so far as I have seen, unknown in England.

There is no better stroke on the back-hand for a high-bounding ball, as it can then be played quite horizontally, and the lift or top obtained by the angle of the racket as it hits the ball.



PLATE CXX
MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

BACK-HAND STROKE
FINISH

Miss Douglass has a good, but not severe, back-hand. If she had, on her back-hand, the beautiful, quick-dropping, cross-court stroke which she has on the fore-hand, she would have all the angles of the court at her command.



PLATE CXXI
MISS THOMSON

BACK-HAND STROKE
PLAYING HIGH-
BOUNDING BALL
FROM BASE-LINE

Miss Thomson's back-hand is undoubtedly her strongest point. She plays many splendid shots, both volleys and ground strokes, on this side. The ball may be seen just above the racket.



PLATE CXXII
MISS THOMSON

BACK-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE

Here I think the body is facing the net too much. The feet, as shown by base-line, are not separated enough in a line with the flight of the ball. The left arm seems too limp and irresponsible. It is not doing anything to help.



PLATE CXXIII
MISS THOMSON

BACK-HAND DRIVE
FINISH OF STROKE

This is one of Miss Thomson's best strokes, but in doubles or mixed matches is not often seen, as she carries out my volleying maxim, "Never let anything touch the ground which you can play with a reasonable chance of a good stroke on the volley."



PLATE CXXIV
MRS. STERRY

BACK-HAND DRIVE
FROM BASE-LINE.
SWING BACK

Mrs. Sterry is very accurate on her back-hand, but I think imparts slightly too much cut to the ball. This lessens the pace of her return considerably.



PLATE CXXV
MRS. STERRY

BACK-HAND DRIVE
STROKE PLAYED

The position of the feet here is not very good. Mrs. Sterry has played across her foot and has a slight tendency to overbalance.



PLATE CXXVI
MISS W. A. LONGHURST

**FINISHING BACK-
HAND STROKE**

PLATE CXXVI

FINISHING BACK-HAND STROKE

Notice the excellent position of body, feet, and left arm. Note particularly that the blade of the racket is practically facing the net. This is a true straight back-hand, but almost immediately the ball is struck the side of the racket nearer to us should be turned gradually up, until at the end of the swing the thumb is on the upper side. If this be not done you will be "locked" on the shoulder, as Miss Longhurst apparently is here, although probably she is just about to turn the racket.



PLATE CXXVII
P. DE BORMAN

LOW STRAIGHT
BACK-HAND DRIVE

On account of his hold, de Borman can play this shot very well. It is, of course, always played from close to the leg, but de Borman constantly gets too close on to the bound, and also too close laterally, so that his shot suffers.



PLATE CXXVIII
G. A. CARIDIA

FINISH OF
STRAIGHT BACK-
HAND DRIVE

PLATE CXXVIII

FINISH OF STRAIGHT BACK-HAND DRIVE

Note the fine position of body, feet, and left arm. This stroke could hardly be played in better form. You see here practically the same shot as in Plate CXXVI., but all stiffness is gone from it because, as there explained, the thumb has come up on top, permitting a clean, effective, and graceful finish.

PLATE CXXIX

STRAIGHT BACK-HAND DRIVE, FINISH

This is practically the same shot. It requires little explanation to convince anyone that a hit straight up against the line of flight of a ball must produce greater speed than a glancing blow of similar power. This is why the ball leaves Caridia's racket in such a different manner from that seen in the average stroke, especially on his back-hand. Notice that the racket is braced *across* the wrist-joint. I always like watching Caridia play, or playing against him. He plays a much more sporting game than most players, and when he considers he has a winning shot on he goes for it like a man whose supreme object in life is not of necessity to pat the ball back until the other fellow fails to return it.



PLATE CXXIX
G. A. CARIDIA

STRAIGHT BACK
HAND DRIVE
FINISH



PLATE CXXX
P. A. VAILE

STRAIGHT BACK-HAND
DRIVE OFF LOW BALL

PLATE CXXX

STRAIGHT BACK-HAND DRIVE OFF LOW BALL

This shot is played close (laterally) to the body, otherwise at about the same distance as an ordinary back-hand. It is played about eighteen inches from the ground, but with lift can be taken much higher. Note position of feet and weight being transferred.

PLATE CXXXI

FINISH OF STRAIGHT BACK-HAND DRIVE

I was asked if this was a "pose." I am not able to pose on the tip of one foot. The shot was taken at the exact instant that I specified, and shows an absolutely natural finish. In these straight shots, even were there any object in doing so, it is almost impossible, without effort, to check the racket before it is above the head. Notice the balance of the body by left arm and lightly-clenched hand.

"Follow-through" is very much neglected in many of the English strokes. This should not be so, for it is as important in Lawn Tennis as it is in Golf.



PLATE CXXXI
P. A. VAILE

FINISH OF STRAIGHT
BACK-HAND DRIVE



PLATE CXXXII
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND
CROSS-COURT DRIVE

PLATE CXXXII

BACK-HAND CROSS-COURT DRIVE

This is the stroke shown at D E, Fig. 27, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and is an invaluable passing shot which I do not see used here. The racket comes on to the ball almost in the line of flight which you intend it to take, and with considerable lift. This return, at times, has its line of flight at quite an inclined angle to the surface of the court, and it generally pitches very close to the net, for the lift brings it down into the court in an astonishing manner. In singles and doubles, it and its twin brother on the fore-hand side are invaluable, but much neglected, passing shots. Even as slow passing shots they are better than any others on account of their quick-dropping propensity. The line of flight can be hidden until the last moment, for the merest turn of the face of the racket in this stroke means yards of difference in placing. The follow-through is almost in a line with the intended flight of the ball. Note position of feet and balance by left arm.

THE HALF-VOLLEY

This beautiful and useful stroke is fully explained by diagram and letterpress in *Modern Lawn Tennis*. It would be impossible for me to go again as fully as I have done there into the details of each stroke. This volume is intended to show you actually how the leading players of the world produce their strokes, and to explain to you the merits and demerits of such strokes. G. A. Caridia is unquestionably the leading exponent of this stroke in England, and probably in the world, and on his back-hand it is at times a treat to see. Many of his returns I would almost class as impudent shots, so resourceful, daring, and successful are they. I know no other player who could play them. I have been rather unlucky in not getting the best possible photographs of this famous stroke, but it certainly has not been for want of trying. Mr. Beldam and I have been very much occupied, and Mr. Caridia has been away from London a good deal, so that we found it very hard to fit our times in. I hope on some future occasion to do his stroke justice. In the meantime I have had to fill the gap.

It is the most difficult shot to show by photographs, I think, for the timing must be perfect ; and even when you have got it, it does not always produce the impression that the ball is just rising from the ground. In

the two fore-hand shots of myself, however, Mr. Beldam has been perfectly successful. Plate CXXXIII. shows me timing the ball so that I may get it with the face of the racket inclined forward towards the net immediately it has bounded, as shown in Fig. 9 of *Modern Lawn Tennis*. This is of the utmost importance if you wish to half-volley really well.

English players half-volley better, I think, than any others. This is not a credit to them, for it really proceeds from the greatest blemish of their game, and that is the great distance which they stand from the net. They are the finest low volleyers in the world. Again, why? Because they must thus make up for their "shortcomings"—a fine and expressive word, here exactly expressing their fault. However, they are both fine shots, and will be quite useful to have when our players forsake their present position and go up more as they undoubtedly will before long—for if they don't go "up" it is "a million to a gooseberry" that they will "go down."

PLATE CXXXIII

PLAYING FORE-HAND HALF-VOLLEY : TIMING STROKE

Here I am shown playing to cover the ball by the inclined face of the racket so as to correct the bound and obtain low trajectory. Note position of feet, balance by left arm, and, above everything else in this stroke, that the eyes are glued on to the ball, for it is your "blind" stroke. I am showing these pictures in their consecutive order of motion.



PLATE CXXXIII
P. A. VAILE

PLAYING FORE-HAND
HALF-VOLLEY
TIMING STROKE



PLATE CXXXIV
P. A. VAILE

FORE-HAND HALF-VOLLEY
STROKE PLAYED AND BALL
JUST LEAVING RACKET

Note here position of legs slightly bent at knees, balance of body and left arm, and position of feet ;
“eyes on the ball” even after stroke played.



PLATE CXXXV
W. V. EAVES

FORE-HAND
HALF-VOLLEY
FINISH

Eaves plays this stroke very well. He is a little inclined to play with his legs too rigid, but he nevertheless produces a very fine shot, and, this picture to the contrary notwithstanding, takes a keen interest in the ball and all its doings.



PLATE CXXXVI
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND
HALF-VOLLEY

Here I am shown reaching for a half-volley which is going wide on my back-hand. It is practically unavoidable, of course, in this position that you play across your right foot ; indeed, the half-volley must frequently be taken any way you can get at it, though, of course, there is a best way. Very often it can be well and effectively played with the back to the net. Remember that by means of this stroke you can cover a great deal of ground. From my fore-hand shot to my back-hand half-volley is easily a reach of thirteen feet.



PLATE CXXXVII
G. A. CARIDIA

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND
HALF-VOLLEY

(See page 229.)



PLATE CXXXVIII
P. A. VAILE

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND
HALF-VOLLEY

(See page 230.)

PLATE CXXXVII

FINISH OF BACK-HAND HALF-VOLLEY

This is the finish of a very fine half-volley from the base-line off the return of the service. Note again carefully the fine natural position of body and feet, the straight follow-through, the racket just beginning to turn up so as to allow free shoulder action. Observe the balance by extended left arm. Taking all his strokes, I think Caridia is the most finished and graceful player in England. I am glad he rolls up his sleeves. Those flapping cuffs have nothing to recommend them, not even appearances.

PLATE CXXXVIII

FINISH OF BACK-HAND HALF-VOLLEY

Note straight face of racket as in Plate CXXVI. This is where the racket begins to turn. Note position of feet, and observe that the left arm is out of sight behind, doing its duty in balancing. Observe the similarity in the position of body, legs, feet, and arms of the figures in this plate and the preceding one.

THE VOLLEY

Nearly every player's volley partakes largely of the nature of his service. This is quite natural, for his volley is the child of the service. He must have started his game with a service. That was his first volley. If this point is well considered the importance of acquiring a good service can never be underestimated, for all the father's good or bad qualities are almost invariably transmitted to the child in this case.

If you see a man who delivers his service without drawing his weight back on to the rearmost foot and drooping his right shoulder, it is great odds that that man will try to smash with his arm only. This is nearly always the case.

This is a great argument in favour of ladies learning to serve overhead. It really is splendid practice for overhead volleying, and they always have the underhand service to fall back on when they are tired or want a change.

Ladies should not forget this, as it is quite an important matter for them.

Those desirous of becoming expert overhead volleyers should study Fig. 26, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and the accompanying letterpress.

FORE-HAND OVERHEAD VOLLEYS

PLATE CXXXIX

ABOUT TO SMASH

Observe the stiff rear leg. This is one of Riseley's worst faults. There can be no "go" from a stiff leg, and Riseley's weight does not go far enough back, either in the service or his smash, to be of full use as it comes forward. Consequently, from beyond the service line his smash is not too good. Near the net, where he can hit it down and produce a high bound, this fault is not so detrimental, and from that position he is very deadly at times.



PLATE CXXXIX
F. L. RISELEY

ABOUT TO
SMASH



PLATE CXL
F. L. RISELEY

SMASH PLAYED

P L A T E C X L

SMASH PLAYED

Riseley follows-through most of his strokes well, and so atones in a measure for the fault mentioned above, but I am sure that he loses a lot of power by not handling his weight to greater advantage. This is an important matter to a big player like Riseley, who, notwithstanding this defect, plays quite a graceful game.



PLATE CXLI
C. H. L. CAZALET

SMASHING

Cazalet in smashing sometimes uses a bit of fore-hand cut, and this gives him great command of the ball in placing when he is in form. Note weight on rear leg about to be transferred as shot is played.



PLATE CXLII
ANTHONY WILDING

SMASHING

Wilding plays a very fine smash at times, but is inclined to stand off it too much, even as he throws his ball up in the service too far in front. He will have a fine smash when he gets more under his work.



PLATE CXLIII
MISS THOMSON

ABOUT TO
SMASH

PLATE CXLIII

ABOUT TO SMASH

The position here is generally good. The feet are, if anything, too close together, and the attitude is a little stiff. The left arm is not doing anything to help. Miss Thomson is not too good overhead when near the service line. She should learn the overhead service, which is always a good change, and it would make a wonderful difference in her overhead work.

PLATE CXLIV

ABOUT TO SMASH

This is a most instructive picture, as it contains nearly all the essentials of a good smash —weight well back, right shoulder drooped, balance by extended left arm, right knee flexed, and head well back. The position of the legs is most important, and ladies who desire to excel overhead should note this. Compare this attitude with Plate XXXIV., in which I am shown about to serve. The positions are almost identical. Hillyard has a very fine smash.



PLATE CXLIV
GEORGE W. HILLYARD

**ABOUT TO
SMASH**



PLATE CXIV
GEORGE W. HILLYARD

SMASHING

Hillyard is here seen just smashing the ball. One can almost see him transferring his weight from ball of toe to ball of toe. This is most important, as is fully explained in *Modern Lawn Tennis*.



PLATE CXLVI
GEORGE W. HILLYARD

FINISH OF SMASH
PLAYED RUNNING BACK

Hillyard plays a fine smash from this position when forced to take it retreating. His great reach and exceptionally strong arm-work almost make up for the necessary absence of body which there is in this shot unless the player has poised himself.



PLATE CXLVII
S. H. SMITH

FINISH OF
SMASH

PLATE CXLVII

FINISH OF SMASH

I am glad to be able to show Smith smashing in good form. It is a popular delusion that he cannot. Anyone who knows the game and has seen him serving must know that this idea is incorrect. It is simply a matter of confidence and practice. This picture may yet win for Smith the Singles Championship of England. If he lays it to heart it will go near to doing so.

PLATE CXLVIII

SMASH PLAYED WHILE RUNNING BACK

Mahony rather likes this shot, and "deals it out" very vigorously to it. Observe the natural, if somewhat joyful, attitude. This is a case in which the ball appears to be going up. When it was hit the racket was up straight, and moreover Mahony jumped to the shot.



PLATE CXLVIII
H. S. MAHONY

SMASH PLAYED
WHILE RUNNING BACK



PLATE CXLIX
R. F. DOHERTY

SMASHING

Doherty's smash is at times very fine. Generally speaking, he is inclined to the common error of straight smashing, but sometimes places on the side-lines with great judgment. His overhead timing is not so good as H. L. Doherty's, nor is the stroke so severe.



PLATE CL
R. F. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
SMASH

A strong natural stroke. Here the ball is seen above the stand. It looks as though it is rising, but if you take the length of Doherty's arm and racket even without allowing for a stretch or jump, you will find that the racket will be higher up than the ball.



PLATE CLI
MISS STAWELL-BROWN

ABOUT TO
SMASH

PLATE CLI

ABOUT TO SMASH

This is a very fine, natural attitude. Miss Stawell-Brown smashes, as she serves, with vigour and good body-swing. Her overhead work is about the best I know in the ladies' division. Note the fine position of feet, the balance by the left arm, the excellent distribution of weight, and the evident intention—so important—to “do business.”

PLATE CLII

FINISH OF SMASH

The main defect of Miss Douglass's overhead work and service is again apparent here. She is hanging back off the stroke instead of putting her weight into it. The consequence is, her volleying suffers. A step forward, and allowing the body to turn so that the right shoulder came round, would make a vast difference.



PLATE CLII
MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

**FINISH OF
SMASH**



PLATE CLIII
H. L. DOHERTY

ABOUT TO
SMASH

This and the five subsequent pictures almost tell their own tale. There is little need for me to praise H. L. Doherty's smash. It is one of the very finest, and its pace is undeniable.



PLATE CLIV
H. L. DOHERTY

SMASHING
BALL ON RACKET

PLATE CLIV

SMASHING: BALL ON RACKET

Doherty places his smash well, and it is not very often, as are so many others, picked up and lobbed back. When he cannot win by placing he generally "puts it out of sight." Here he is shown actually striking the ball. Doherty tells me that he plays this shot with a loose wrist. Note position of feet, and the body weight coming on to the ball.

This is the plate which I have already referred to. I wanted to show Doherty putting some body into his smash, and he was fortunately caught in the act.



PLATE CLV
H. L. DOHERTY

SMASH PLAYED
WHILE RUNNING
ACROSS COURT

Doherty takes this shot very cleverly. As a matter of fact it suits him, for his hold of the racket makes it much easier for him to play a straight shot down the fore-hand side-line if his body is sideways on to the net at the moment of striking.



PLATE CLVI
H. L. DOHERTY

SMASH
FINISH OF
STROKE

PLATE CLVI

SMASH : FINISH OF STROKE

The position of the feet is here good. I think Doherty's extra pace is got because, at the moment of smashing, his forearm and racket are nearly in the same straight line. Many players preserve the "English angle" even in smashing, and the stroke must then be comparatively weak.

PLATE CLVII

FINISHING SMASH

Here the peculiarity of hold is very plain, and the weight is thrown across the feet. Nevertheless, the smash was a very fine one, and apparently, so far as the eye could judge, played in good form ; but I cannot understand why the left shoulder should be locked and the left arm where it is.



PLATE CLVII
H. L. DOHERTY

FINISHING
SMASH



PLATE CLVIII
H. L. DOHERTY

FINISH OF
SMASH

PLATE CLVIII

FINISH OF SMASH

Here is again, in a most marked degree, the smashing "across the foot," and also another strong characteristic of H. L. Doherty's work which I think is quite unadvisable for most players, that is the locking of the left shoulder, and the folding across his body of his left arm when it is not hanging loosely. However, it is evident that the result of the stroke was all the player could wish for. This is a very fine photograph of a most characteristic finish.



PLATE CLVIII
HERBERT BADDELEY

PLAYING A
SMASH

Here Baddeley has just played the smash, which was a very fine stroke. The ball may be seen leaving the racket



PLATE CLVIIIb
HERBERT BADDELEY

FINISH OF
SMASH

Baddeley here seems to be hanging off his smash a little, but he nearly always "puts it away" unless it is very far back in the court.



PLATE CLVIIIc
WILFRED BADDELEY

ABOUT TO
SMASH

This is a good natural position, weight well back and balance by left arm good.



PLATE CLVIII
WILFRED BADDELEY

FINISH OF
SMASH

This is a very characteristic shot of Baddeley's. He plays it, as he does all strokes, with great precision, and, at times, severity.

BACK-HAND VOLLEYS ABOVE THE NET

PLATE CLIX

BACK-HAND SMASH

One of Mahony's very best strokes. Note that all the weight is on the rear foot. Note also, that whatever Mahony's right arm is doing, the left with lightly-clenched hand is balancing it.



PLATE CLIX
H. S. MAHONY

BACK-HAND
SMASH



PLATE CLX
H. S. MAHONY

BACK-HAND
SMASH

This is another characteristic stroke. In this case the position is not quite so good, but it is well to see a man playing his shots "away from the book" sometimes.



PLATE C1.XI
A. W. GORE

PLAYING BACK-
HAND VOLLEY

Gore at times plays this stroke very well. If he would divest himself of the entirely erroneous idea that he cannot volley, it would improve his game very considerably.



PLATE CLXII
MISS THOMSON

BACK-HAND
SMASH

This is quite a favourite stroke of Miss Thomson's, and this particular one does not seem an exception to the general rule. Miss Thomson is very severe in playing this stroke.



PLATE CLXIIA
H. S. MAHONY

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND VOLLEY

PLATE CLXIIA

FINISH OF BACK-HAND VOLLEY

A strong and characteristic shot. Note the position of feet. Here we again have an instance of the judicious manner in which Mahony balances his body by the extended left arm with clenched hand, which, I may repeat, is of more importance than casual players think.



PLATE CLXIIB
G. M. SIMOND

BACK-HAND SMASH
FINISH

Simond plays a good back-hand smash. This particular effort, although a good stroke, found the net a little too low. Note particularly how the weight has been completely transferred.



PLATE CLXIIc
G. A. CARIDIA

FINISH OF
BACK-HAND VOLLEY

PLATE CLXIIc

FINISH OF BACK-HAND VOLLEY

A life-like and characteristic picture, full of action, as was the stroke. Note position of feet, the apparent vigour of action, the balance by the extended arm, and—most important of all, perhaps—the strong natural grip of the racket, which is braced across the wrist-joint and runs in the same straight line as the forearm. Observe, too, the full and natural follow-through. When Caridia gets on to a ball with this shot the result is that which should attend almost every volley that comes to hand a fair distance above the net—he buries it ; and it certainly is prettier and less fatiguing than to keep up a succession of semi-lob pat volleys from the service line, quite apart from the fact of its being a more manly and sportsmanlike game.

With the defective English grip it is almost impossible to deal with any volley below the shoulder as a man should be able to do.

PLATE CLXIII

BACK-HAND VOLLEY NEAR NET

We notice here again the tendency to hold off the stroke. I do not think I have seen another photograph where the inherent "vice" of the English grip is so plainly exemplified. Can anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of anatomy believe that any man, let alone a lady, could possibly get any power worth speaking of on to this ball?



PLATE CLXIII
MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

BACK-HAND VOLLEY
NEAR NET



PLATE CLXIV
ANTHONY WILDING

SNAPPING BACK-HAND
VOLLEY AT NET

PLATE CLXIV

SNAPPING BACK-HAND VOLLEY AT NET

This is rather a stiff-looking shot, as the stroke was all arm and wrist work. Compare this grip with that in Plate CLXIII. There is here evident strength, the racket across the wrist-joint and in the same line (relatively to flight of ball) with the forearm. Wilding's vigorous fore-hand is also obtained by aid of the natural New Zealand grip. He learnt his Tennis in Christchurch, New Zealand.

LOW VOLLEYS

PLATE CLXV

LOW FORE-HAND VOLLEY

Miss Thomson plays this shot very truly and naturally, with slight downward action, the racket finishing as seen in Plate CLXVI.



PLATE CLXV
MISS THOMSON

LOW FORE-HAND
VOLLEY



PLATE CLXVI
MISS THOMSON

FINISH OF
LOW FORE-HAND
VOLLEY

This is the finish of the stroke in Plate CLXV., and shows the slight downward motion of the racket.



PLATE CLXVII
H. L. DOHERTY

PLAYING LOW
BACK-HAND VOLLEY
SWING BACK



PLATE CLXVIII
R. F. DOHERTY

PLAYING LOW
BACK-HAND VOLLEY

PLATE CLXVII

PLAYING LOW BACK-HAND VOLLEY : SWING BACK

In this case it will be noticed that Doherty is sideways on to the net, his left foot pointing away from it—a good and natural position. Notice how flat-footed he is standing. This, as stated in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, is almost the only instance of a shot wherein it is permissible, in fact almost necessary, to stand on the full sole of your shoe.

PLATE CLXVIII

PLAYING LOW BACK-HAND VOLLEY

It looks very much as if we had here caught Doherty violating his oft-repeated rule, "Keep your eye on the ball." As a matter of fact the stroke has been played, the ball is leaving the racket, and the racket is rising behind it. Note left foot turned right away from the net. Half the secret of good back-hand play is correct foot-work. It seems to me that R. F. Doherty, if anything, overdoes it. If he does, it is a good fault.



PLATE CLXIX
H. L. DOHERTY

LOW BACK-HAND
VOLLEY

A pretty and effective stroke. Note the correct position of feet. This stroke was played with a slight draw across the ball. The ball is approaching you, and the racket travelling across from back-hand to fore-hand side of court.



PLATE CLXX
C. H. L. CAZALET

LOW BACK-HAND
VOLLEY FROM
SERVICE LINE

PLATE CLXX

LOW BACK-HAND VOLLEY FROM SERVICE LINE

Cazalet plays this shot crisply and effectively. His hold is firm and his wrist-work good. Note that his racket and forearm (relatively to line of flight of ball) are practically in the same straight line. Cazalet uses a very small handle, and agrees with me that large handles ruin wrist-work. He also uses the natural fore-hand grip advocated by me.



PLATE CLXXI
C. H. L. CAZALET

LOW BACK-HAND
VOLLEY

This is the same stroke as in Plate CLXX., taken in a slightly different position. It is quite a favourite of Cazalet's, and when in form he hardly knows how to miss it.



PLATE CLXXII
W. V. EAVES

LOW BACK-HAND
VOLLEY

Eaves is very good at low volleys generally. I sometimes wonder how he gets to them, for he never seems to relax his knees. The position of feet is not very good.



PLATE CLXXIII
W. V. EAVES

LOW BACK-HAND
VOLLEY

This was a fine stroke, and there is more action in this picture than in the preceding plate. Note that the knees are flexed, as they should be, and observe also the forward movement of right foot and balance by extended left arm.



PLATE CLXXIV
H. S. MAHONY

LOW BACK-HAND
VOLLEY

Mahony has a great reach, and with this stroke can reach and return a ball which most people would not give him a chance for. Note particularly here the fine balance.



PLATE CLXXIVA
R. B. HOUGH

FINISH OF A
CUT VOLLEY

This is a favourite stroke of Hough's. He plays it very well, with a kind of stab which drops the ball sharply across court at an angle that is all too little used in English doubles.



PLATE CLXXIVB
P. A. VAILE

PLAYING A LOW
BACK-HAND VOLLEY
AT THE NET
WITH LIFT

(See page 299.)



PLATE CLXXIVc
P. A. VAILE

PLAYING LOW
BACK-HAND VOLLEY

(See page 300.)

PLATE CLXXIV_BPLAYING A LOW BACK-HAND VOLLEY AT THE NET,
WITH LIFT

I attach great importance in all low volleying to keeping your eye approximately on a level with the line of flight of the ball. It will be found of immense assistance. When your shot is good enough to risk it, you should always be right up at the net, not perhaps quite so close as I am here, but very nearly so. Then you can kill the ball, which from the usual position of English volleyers is a mechanical impossibility. In this shot you might think I run the risk of hitting the net, but really there is none. I meet the ball with a racket travelling fast forwardly, upwardly, and obliquely—really the lifting drive (Fig. 15, *Modern Lawn Tennis*), but played as a back-hand volley, which produces a very deadly cross-court stroke. Caridia plays this shot very sweetly, but with a little less cross-court angle than I get, and practically no lift. The beauty of the lift here is that you can absolutely drive upward, and yet make the ball go down all the more quickly.

PLATE CLXXIVc

LOW BACK-HAND VOLLEY

I am giving this plate by special request, as some people cannot understand how with my back hand hold I can get my wrist round. My underhand volley is very nearly the same stroke as Caridia's straight back-hand. Here I have shown the racket absolutely straight in a line with the arm, and it stands to reason that all other positions towards the left will be, if anything, easier. I always play a low volley with a "straight bat" when the stroke is suitable, but am never caught taking one when it can be avoided. I always go to the ball. One of the greatest faults of English players is that they wait for the ball to come to them, and play it underhand, patting it back when with two strides a "kill" is waiting for them. I can understand how my hold has puzzled some players. In the English back-hand volley there is no snap or wrist work. The true stroke is full of it. My arm is not "locked on the shoulder" here, as some might think, for just now the racket is starting to turn as explained in Plates CXXVI. and CXXVIII. and letter-press. The stroke was played some twelve or fifteen inches further back than is shown here. More pace can be got off returns played with this hold than is possible with the English grip, for my hold lends itself naturally to "lift," whereas the English grip is naturally adaptable for, and is chiefly used with, "draw," or "drag," or "cut" across the ball. Quite frequently, in fact, in the majority of cases, the plain face is used.

THE LOB AND THE LOB VOLLEY

It is not usual to treat of a ground stroke and a volley in the same chapter, but as they are played in practically the same manner I have decided to put them together here.

I have gone very fully into the important questions of length and height in lobs in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and particularly into the matter of cut lobs. For full and detailed information as to the tactical advantages of lobbing I must refer my readers to that treatise, as space demands that in these pages I confine myself to dealing mainly with the strokes which you see reproduced here.

PLATE CLXXV

LOBBING FROM THE BASE-LINE

In this stroke the ball is met fairly with the face of the racket, and I endeavour to place it where I intend it to stop rising, not on the base-line. If you lob for the base-line "in the air," you have a great chance of passing it. See Fig. 29, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, which is of great importance in lobbing.



PLATE CLXXV
P. A. VAILE

LOBBING FROM
THE BASE-LINE



PLATE CLXXVI
R. B. HOUGH

FORE-HAND LOB

This is undoubtedly one of Hough's favourite shots, and he does it very well. He seems to get a little "lift" or "roll"—quite a rare factor in a lob—and his length is very good. Note the natural hold of racket.



PLATE CLXXVII
H. L. DOHERTY

LOBBING FROM
THE BASE-LINE

Both of the Dohertys lob very well, and time and again make great recoveries with this stroke. This particular stroke is played with the plain face.



PLATE CLXXVIII
P. A. VAILE

BACK-HAND
CUT LOB FROM
BASE-LINE

PLATE CLXXVIII

BACK-HAND CUT LOB FROM BASE-LINE

The racket is passing across the ball from back-hand to fore-hand, imparting strong cut. I can lob very accurately with this stroke, even off a low fast ball, and find it very useful when in difficulties, as its unusual break often gives me a weak return to operate on.

It is rarely if ever used in England, but is distinctly a stroke worth having.





PLATE CLXXIX
MISS THOMSON

BACK-HAND LOB
FROM BASE-LINE

Miss Thomson rarely plays this shot. It is, however, a useful and necessary stroke. Here the ball may be seen practically resting on the racket, which is, as it should be, almost flat.



PLATE CLXXX
P. A. VAILE

PLAYING A
LOB VOLLEY

(See page 311.)



PLATE CLXXXI
R. B. HOUGH

FINISH OF
FORE-HAND LOB

PLATE CLXXX

PLAYING A LOB VOLLEY

One of the rarest, yet simplest and most valuable, of strokes, especially in a double. The ball here will fall on to the racket when the face is nearly flat, but slightly inclined towards the net. Note position of feet, and balance of left arm, which always seems to be opposite its dexter relation. In this photograph the hand is open. I believe in keeping it lightly closed, and nearly always do so.

PLATE CLXXXI

FINISH OF FORE-HAND LOB

This is quite a characteristic finish of Hough's lob. The lob is a stroke in playing which you require to be exceedingly careful how you use your body. It is evident from Hough's position that he realises this, and is content to allow practically his arm only to do the physical part of the work.

THE CHOP

This is one of the rarest, yet at the same time, to one who understands when and how to use it, one of the most valuable strokes in the game. So little is it used or understood that I cannot at the moment call to mind any book on the game which contains directions that would enable a person to acquire the stroke, and in many of them it is not even mentioned !

This is a great oversight. At Fig. 24 in *Modern Lawn Tennis* I show how this shot is produced, and in the accompanying letterpress deal fully with its merits and demerits ; for although its merits are many, especially against a player who is not familiar with its tricks, it has, under certain circumstances, also its demerits.

I use this stroke with great effect against half-volleyers and low-volleyers, as the shooting bound of the ball makes it hard to time on to the centre of the racket for half-volleying, and if the low-volleyer hits it softly, as he generally does, the ball takes its "check side" (backward vertical rotation) from the racket, even as a billiard ball would from a cushion, and in many cases travels into the net with a trajectory inches lower than it was meant to have. It is distinctly a stroke worth acquiring, and is quite easy to learn.

Ritchie uses it a little, but is more inclined to cut across the ball a bit, so that his shot is comparatively rarely, if ever, a pure chop, which, if properly played, puts on exactly the reverse rotation to that produced by fore-hand lift.



PLATE CLXXXII
P. A. VAILE

CHOPPING FROM
THE BASE-LINE

In this shot the stroke is largely arm-work. The weight, it will be seen, is already transferred, and anything that is wanted will be obtained from loin rotation. Note position of feet.



PLATE CLXXXIII
P. A. VAILE

CHOPPING HIGH-
BOUNDING BALL

The racket will come right down with a forward and downwardly glancing blow (Fig. 24, *Modern Lawn Tennis*), imparting backward vertical spin to the ball. Note position of feet and balance of arm.



PLATE CLXXXIV
P. A. VAILE

FINISH OF
CHOP

It will be seen that the racket has finished practically in a line with the right shoulder. It has not been carried across at all. This is pure chop.



PLATE CLXXXV
M. J. G. RITCHIE

FINISH OF
CHOP

There is an inclination on the part of Ritchie to make this stroke partake more of the nature of a cut or drag. Notice that he has finished slightly across his body. Note the natural position of feet and body.



PLATE CLXXXVI
M. J. G. RITCHIE

FINISH OF
CHOP

The cross finish is here more pronounced than in Plate CLXXXV. The stroke, however, is good and natural, and again the position of feet is excellent.

MATCHES

The following plates are reproductions of matches played on the centre court at the All-England Lawn Tennis Championship meeting in June, 1904.

The arrangements in connection with this tournament were almost perfect this year—much more so, indeed, than was the case at the preceding meeting. The canvas barriers round the centre court were put several yards further away than they were last year, and every court was surrounded by a belt of green canvas about three feet high, thus providing some semblance of a background. What this three feet of canvas means to a player, only those can understand who have tasted the felicity of having for a background stop-netting, and sometimes not even that, and of every now and again losing the ball against a dancing figure in white on another court.

Of course it does not make a perfect background, but it is an immense assistance in keeping one's length. The centre court, where all the most important matches are played, has an almost perfect surface, but unfortunately has a drop of about six inches from side to side. The spectators, as may be seen from the photographs, sit all round this court in or on raised stands. As Lawn Tennis is played in the weather when the fair sex generally favour white, the result is not always pleasant for the players, for if a fast ball goes out

of sight up against a bank of white blouses it does not tend to accuracy of play.

The tournament was splendidly managed in every way, and I cannot remember a solitary grumble, so the players must have been very well pleased.

To those who were privileged to see these matches these pictures will prove pleasant and instructive mementoes, and to those who were not so fortunate they will convey an excellent impression of this famous court, the ultimate convincing ground of England, so far as regards Lawn Tennis.



E. CLXXXVII
 H. AND RISELEY
 7.
 . AND H. L. DOHERTY

CHALLENGE ROUND
 DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP
 OF ENGLAND

H. L. Doherty is serving to Riseley. Note how far back R. F. herty is standing. Although the figures are of necessity small, the l is plainly visible.



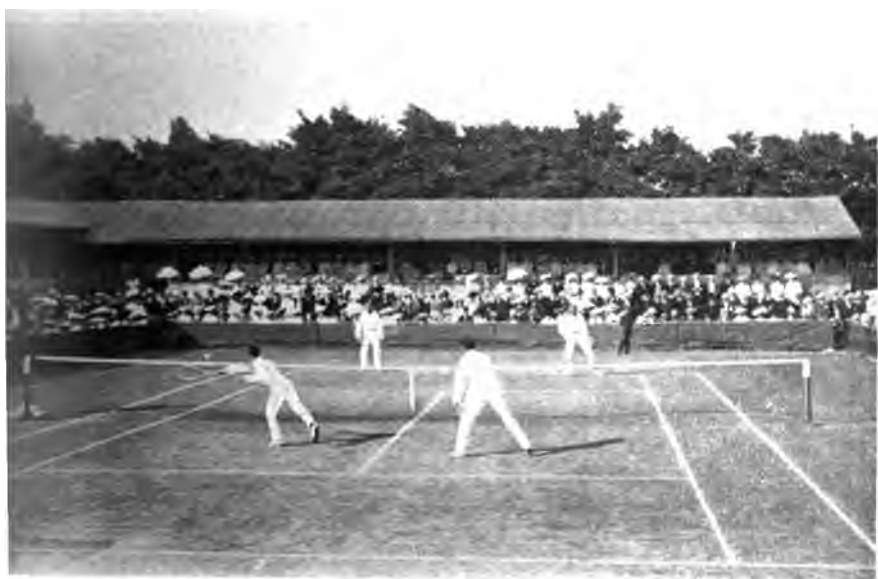
PLATE CLXXXVIII
SMITH AND RISLEY

VS.

R. F. AND H. L. DOHERTY

CHALLENGE ROUND
DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP
OF ENGLAND

S. H. Smith is in the fore-hand court. R. F. Doherty on the service line is returning the ball. Here the brothers are, if anything still further away from the net. Their splendid low volleying alone justifies this position, which would be fatal to them if opposed by a pair anything like their equals and with a full knowledge of the value of rotation in producing quick-dropping cross-court shots.



E. CLXXXIX
 R. AND RISELEY
 VS.
 AND H. L. DOHERTY

CHALLENGE ROUND
 DOUBLES
 CHAMPIONSHIP OF
 ENGLAND

Riseley is in the back-hand court. H. L. Doherty is reaching for back-hand volley. Again it will be noticed how far back the brothers and how close together towards the centre. Quick-dropping cross-court shots at a sharp angle are practically unknown in England, otherwise this position would speedily become untenable. Its weakness is apparent at a glance to one who is accustomed to seeing them played.



PLATE CXC
SMITH AND RISELEY

VS.
R. F. AND H. L. DOHERTY

CHALLENGE CUP
DOUBLES
CHAMPIONSHIP OF
ENGLAND

Smith has just played one of his characteristic fore-hand drives. The ball is probably against a white blouse. The Dohertys are shown getting into position—H. L. Doherty, as usual, slowing down on the service line, which I can never pass as sound Tennis. For Smith's drive, when he is in form, there are only two places even for the Dohertys. They should be right up or right back. No half-way house is permissible. Disregarding this fact cost them the Championship in 1902, when Smith and Riseley won.



THE CXCI
TH AND RISELEY
v.
F. AND H. L. DOHERTY

CHALLENGE ROUND
DOUBLES
CHAMPIONSHIP OF
ENGLAND

The Dohertys are both outside the base-line here, and Riseley has just played a smash.

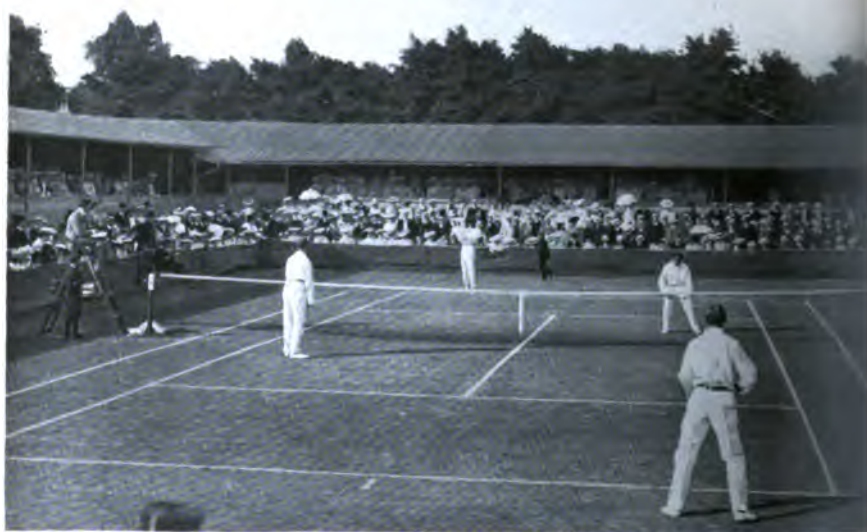


PLATE CXCI
SMITH AND RISELEY
76.
R. F. AND H. L. DOHERTY

CHALLENGE CUP
DOUBLES
CHAMPIONSHIP OF
ENGLAND

R. F. Doherty, lost in a cloud of blouses, is serving to Smith. Doherty throws his ball very high. It may be seen in a line with the spouting of the stand. Note Riseley's position. Unless Smith's return is nearly perfect, H. L. Doherty has the enormous gap between Riseley and his partner for cross-court volleys. This is the weakness of the position of the striker-out's partner in English doubles.



CXCIII
 SS C. M. WILSON
 vs.
 SS A. M. MORTON

LADIES'
 CHAMPIONSHIP

Miss Wilson is driving. Miss Morton awaits developments outside her base-line.



PLATE CXCIV
MISS C. M. WILSON
vs.
MISS A. M. MORTON

LADIES'
CHAMPIONSHIP

Miss Morton, who is really extraordinarily active, is here running for a fore-hand drive.



THE CXC
 S. C. M. WILSON
 vs.
 S. A. M. MORTON

LADIES'
 CHAMPIONSHIP

Miss Wilson has just served. The ball may be seen above the net. Miss Morton eventually won this match.



PLATE CXCVI

MRS. STERRY

v.

MISS D. K. DOUGLASS

CHALLENGE CUP
LADIES'
CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. Sterry, who is serving, was beaten by the holder, Miss D. K. Douglass.



DATE CXCVII
 GREVILLE AND MRS. GREVILLE
 VS.
 RITCHIE AND MISS GREENE

MIXED
 DOUBLES

Greville is at the net. Mrs. Greville has just driven down the line
 to Miss Greene, while Ritchie may be seen "prospecting," as is
 the duty of every self-respecting man in a "mixed." Greville plays
 a fine mixed with Mrs. Greville, who volleys very well and plays a
 good all round game, although she lacks severity.



PLATE CXCVIII
SMITH v. RISELEY

MEN'S
CHAMPIONSHIP

Here we see these notable partners as opponents. Riseley is serving. The ball may be seen leaving his racket. When they were two sets all, Smith retired in favour of Riseley.

THE CAUSE OF BREAK, AND CURL OR SWERVE

“What causes a ball to curl and break?”

Ask any Tennis player this, and he will, if he has given it any thought at all, say, “The twist, I suppose.”

Well, it is the twist or spin which causes both curl and break, but I have not found one Tennis player in five hundred who knows why that makes the ball curl and break. As this may interest some, and is not unimportant in its bearing on the science of the game, I shall endeavour to explain, if I can, what I think is the reason. I have not gone into this matter very thoroughly, but I believe my notions are right. If not, some one will soon tell me; and that is quite an easy way to find out.

Most people know that the top of the wheel of a carriage in motion moves faster than the bottom (or that part which is opposite to the top and is resting on the ground). At first sight this seems quite ridiculous. I remember once a man put his lifting-jack under the axle, spun the wheel, and dared me to say the top was going faster than the bottom. He was very earnest. When I had finished laughing, I gently explained to him that the difference between the carriage in motion and his revolving wheel was the fact that the carriage wheel had a travelling axle (or axis) of rotation, whereas his was stationary; and that the top of the

carriage wheel, on account of the travelling axle, had two motions, forward progress and revolution, while the bottom had forward progress *minus* backward revolution.

So it is with any cut ball. It is travelling on a movable and forwardly-progressing axle, so that, let us say as in the under-hand cut service from left court to left court, the ball is spinning on a nearly vertical axis and from left to right. It is thus spinning as though it were a fly-wheel laid over on an upright axle, instead of on a horizontal one, as is usual.

This being so, the side which is advancing—that is, the side nearest the left side-line—is moving faster and more strongly than the retreating side, nearer to the right side-line, and is therefore meeting with more air-resistance. The inevitable result is, that as any projectile always tries to find the line of least resistance, the strong fast side of the ball is continually trying to get across and “take the water” of its weaker half, while the weaker half is holding back. It follows then, almost as naturally as that the stronger horse will bore his mate across the road, that the strong forward-spinning side will beat the weak retreating one. This is the primary cause of “curl” or swerve.

On the same lines, when the ball strikes the ground and compresses and sinks into the turf, or on to the wood, the strong-spinning progressive half beats the retiring half, even as it is with men, and, although slightly retarded by the action of its weaker half, goes on its way with a deflection (even from its curved line of flight, caused by the spin) proportionate to the amount of “devil” on it.

This is, I believe, a correct statement of the primary cause of curl and of the cause of break. And now you know, you may say, "How will this be of advantage to me?" It may save you many a point in ordinary weather, and many a match in windy weather.

A projectile always seeks the line of least resistance. A bullet always drifts the way of the rifling, I am told. If you have got this idea into your head, and happen to be playing a man in a strong cross-court wind, when lobbing is practically out of the question, you may know, that if you understand thoroughly the production of curl, you may have three feet or more of extra passing room at the net for your drive; that it may look as though it were going yards out at the net, yet when your opponent has let it go, and the pace goes off a bit and the wind gets to work, it will swoop round behind your adversary like a boomerang. This stroke is *de Borman's* exaggerated drive, lying down on its side with its greatest width of curve up against the wind.

This is only one of the very many ways in which a proper understanding of curl will help you. On the same day you may know that your cross-court lifting drive with the wind wants a gentle upward wrist-flick, and it will fly and dive like a flash. Across the court the other way you can let it have it, arm and heavy, and the curl will fight under the wind and dive for the side-line in a miraculous manner.

I could multiply instances, but must not weary you; but you should think of this, and try it a little at all times, wind or calm.

Many people think that the curl is caused by the

grip of the ball on the cushion of air which always precedes any rapidly moving body. This theory will not, I think, hold, for if it were so the ball would drift *against* its spin, whereas it always drifts *with* it. The strong-spinning half certainly has a cushion of air in front of it, and it always seems to me that this cushion is trying all the while to "screw the scrum"—to borrow an apt football phrase—and, no doubt, pushing as it does strongly on the forward-spinning side, it must assist to "bore" the ball out of a straight line of flight.

If the curl were caused by the ball taking its "running side" (Fig. 17, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) off the cushion of air in front of it, it would follow naturally that in driving with lift (Fig. 15, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) into a heavy wind the ball would hold off the ground longer, as the grip of the cushion of air would be so much stronger; but such, as is well known, is not the case.

The forward-spinning side naturally gets a stronger grip on the air cushion than the retreating side, as the former is fighting against the wind or air, while the latter is all the time yielding to it. This is why at cricket, tennis, or any other ball game a greater swerve can be obtained when the spinning ball is going up into a wind, or meeting a wind at an oblique angle.

PERSONALITIES

The essence of this book is its human interest, its life, as represented by the pictures, which in many cases seem almost to move ; and although I have dealt as fully with each individual stroke as seemed to me necessary, it will be, I think, not uninteresting that I should add here my impressions of the various players' games, their merits and demerits, for it must be remembered that I can see the play of English players as it is utterly impossible for them to see it. To quote one reviewer of my book, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, I have the power to view the English game from a "more detached and impersonal standpoint than would be possible for any English player."

I shall take the ladies first, and of course Miss D. K. Douglass claims the place of honour.

One cannot but admire Miss Douglass's play, but, as I have pointed out, her chief fault is in standing off her service and her volley. There is not nearly enough body in all her aerial work. She does not take advantage of her very fine length to go up to the net, although when she has to go up to a short one she very often stays there and scores by a well-placed volley. She has a remarkably fine fore-hand drive, and one of the best quick-dropping fore-hand cross-court drives in England—men's included. On the back-hand this

invaluable shot (D, E, Fig. 27, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) seems quite unknown. Many of Miss Douglass's opponents go in on a good length diagonal shot down her fore-hand. It is practically giving her the ace. She has the side-line shot D, A, or the sharp cross-court shot D, E (Fig. 27, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, but on the fore-hand instead of, as there shown, on the back-hand), equally at her disposal. She generally uses the sharp quick-dropping cross-court shot D, E, and passes her opponent with great precision. A good volleyer like Miss Thomson, with a knowledge of centre theory and a proper respect for Miss Douglass's fore-hand, would open up her game more, and provide a splendid exhibition of Tennis, but she would require to be in better condition than some of the ladies were this year.

Mrs. Sterry, one of the gamest and cheeriest lady players that ever stepped on to a court, is perhaps the finest all-round lady volleyer in the world. For all volleys at and above the height of the net, when played close to the net, I should of course give Miss Thomson the palm. For low volleys and smashes combined, especially some way from the net, Mrs. Sterry would have my award ; while for smashing alone I do not know anything to beat Miss Stawell-Brown's graceful, natural, and effective work. Mrs. Sterry was not beaten until the final of the Ladies' Championship.

Miss Thomson had quite her share of success at Wimbledon, as with Miss W. A. Longhurst she won the Ladies' Doubles, and she and S. H. Smith annexed the Mixed event. In the Singles, however, Miss Thomson quite failed to do herself justice. It was apparent that she was not really so fit as she required

to be when opposing such an active player as Miss A. M. Morton. Fine player as she undoubtedly is, Miss Thomson has several pronounced faults in her game, attention to which would make her a formidable opponent for any player in the world. Firstly, she lacks an overhead service. Her own is probably as effective and really less fatiguing. Why then should she change? My answer is, "Show me the underhand server who is a really good all-round volleyer." I never saw him or her. One's volleying nearly always partakes of the nature of one's service, and it is for this reason that I always advocate the use of the overhead service for ladies. Remember, I would not say discontinue an effective underhand, but, especially if you are robust, have the other. Without being guilty of great flattery, I could not call Miss Thomson good overhead except when she is close up to the net. It would, as she plays at present, be impossible for her to be so. The feet are too close together, the body too straight, and the consequence is the ball finds the net. The overhead service would correct this. Miss Thomson's first service finds the band with wonderful frequency. Her second is pitched rather high. She should endeavour to strike an average.

There can be little doubt, I think, that Miss Thomson is the best mixed-double player in the world, and with a little more mobility she would be a wonder. She gets too fixed, and is rather inclined to wait for the ball to come to her than to go to it. With her volleying capacity she should carry out my instructions to the man in the chapter on Mixed Doubles in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and hit everything she can get to. Miss

Thomson's back-hand shots are perhaps the best in England.

Miss W. A. Longhurst plays a fine single. She keeps a beautiful length and is very active. She is rather inclined to get too close to the line of flight of the ball, but gets out of it with a characteristic sweep which is well shown in one of the plates. Her play in the final of the Ladies' Doubles was characterised by great judgment, her driving, placing, and lobbing being all that could be desired, while her anticipation—that quality so sadly lacking in many ladies—was excellent and enabled her side to save many valuable points.

I am sorry to say that I have not had sufficient opportunity of seeing Mrs. George W. Hillyard play to be able to make any remarks which would have the least value. She was manifestly short of work at Wimbledon, and, after being put out when she was "clean off," had the aggravation of finding herself, near the end of the week, in really good form again. In practice with Miss Wilson she put up some splendid games. Mrs. Hillyard won the Ladies' Championship of England in 1889, 1894, 1897, 1899, and 1900, and the Covered Court Championship in 1901, besides other events too numerous to mention. As I cannot speak of her play, I must leave her achievements to do so. It could not be done more eloquently.

Miss A. M. Morton is a player of wonderful energy and activity. I cannot understand why she should waste so much of it running from end to end of the base-line. She can volley and serve overhead, although she generally uses the underhand cut. Her pace would be invaluable to her in getting to the net. That and a

knowledge of centre theory are her shortest roads to the Championship.

Miss Wilson plays a fine natural game, but does not use her great reach and volleying powers to the best advantage. Judicious running-up I really believe saves exertion, and if Miss Wilson gave her back-hand a little more attention and did a good deal more attacking she would be a formidable opponent.

It is as a mixed-double player that Mrs. Greville shines, but she is also capable of putting up a very fine single, as she has proved time and again. The greatest fault in her game is a slight lack of severity, but that really is quite a general failing, and is not even confined to the ladies.

Of the men I must, of course, take H. L. Doherty first. I have already passed him through my mill on various occasions, and I shall not, therefore, make the operation this time too long or painful. Thinking his game over, the most prominent defect, so far as I can see, is the want of absolutely the most important ground stroke in modern Lawn Tennis, and that is, without a chance of argument, the fore-hand drive with lift (Fig. 15, *Modern Lawn Tennis*). I cannot understand why he does not use it. It surely cannot be that he does not know it, and yet the use of it would remove one of the chief blemishes of his game—poor length. By means of this stroke you can hit the ball harder, and yet keep it more under command and on the right side of the base-line, than it is possible to do with any other ground stroke in the game. Once you have acquired it properly it almost seems to give you length. Doherty comes across on the inside of

the flight of the ball and sometimes gets a little drop, but it is far from being an ideal fore-hand for a Champion of the World, and the other—the absolute king of ground strokes—is so easy to acquire.

R. F. Doherty is, in my opinion, quite the equal—I shall leave it at that—of his brother. Nearly all his strokes are very easily and naturally played, and to me he is a miracle. He uses a hold that would “anchor” me, and I believe most players, but nevertheless he “gets there.” This is just another illustration of the fact that you must not unreasoningly adopt any of the holds I have shown either here or in *Modern Lawn Tennis*. You must take the one which suits you best, or get as near to it as you can. Personally, much as I love Lawn Tennis, if I were condemned to play it with R. F. Doherty’s grip or to give up the game, I should say, “I am off to see what I can teach the golfers now.”

Looking at the game of the Messrs. Doherty “from that detached and impersonal standpoint”—which is impossible for any English player—(I thank my reviewer for that phrase, for it quite precludes any “back” answers)—I seem to see two of the finest players the world has ever seen robbed of quite half the game, and the game in consequence suffering. Of course I would not say that my view—from the detached and impersonal standpoint—is the correct one, but, such as it is, there it is, and I have endeavoured to catalogue the missing half or a portion of it. I have never seen R. F. Doherty play a good back-hand smash except right at the net, nor have I ever heard that he has one. From his hold, unless his wrist is built of

steel wire, I should count it an impossibility. I have repeatedly seen him tied up by a volley which comes close to his right side from his waist up to his shoulder, and of course this with his hold is natural. Although he gets a really fine back-hand shot I could never pass the production of it. That cross-legged finish is quite unnecessary, and a waste of valuable time if you want to get to business quickly afterwards. Generally speaking, in both the brothers' work there seemed to me, except in the smash, a lack of sting. Even in these strokes there was not too strong an average of power, and many of them were picked up and returned. Now and again R. F. Doherty places his smash beautifully and with good pace ; while H. L. Doherty's best doesn't want any recommendation.

Speaking of the lack of sting in the ground work, I have often heard that the Dohertys' drives, if they may be so called, are much faster than they appear. I have heard that fable about other drives almost from my cradle. I have watched and judged the pace and flight of tennis-balls for over fifteen years, and the man who could persuade me that the Dohertys' drives are "fast," could easily convince me that H. L. Doherty's best smash is "piffle." It would be impossible, I think, for players of their calibre to play so "easy" a game if it were not for the defective hold of the racket adopted. This, unfortunately, has been followed blindly by players, and the result is that the axiom of the game is now, "*Let* the other man make the mistake," and not as it should be, "*Make* him make the mistake."

Unfortunately the first position is only too characteristic of our nation. It is shown continually. In the

International University Athletics recently, all that required dash and go to win went from us to the Americans. In steadiness and solidity we buried them. During the same week, with the rifle New Zealand won the Kolapore Cup, and a Canadian won the King's Prize, while at cricket the South Africans beat us. Let us, for the sake of the game, get some dash and go into Lawn Tennis, and stop pat-volleying from our feet from just inside the service-line, and "lying round" waiting for the other fellows to miss, instead of making them do it. Too much of this will kill the game, and if it goes on the "dash and go" will tell, and the Davis Cup go away to America again.

F. L. Riseley was runner-up for the Championship. His back-hand has improved considerably, and he does not take it off the wrong leg nearly so often as he did last year. I do not think his method of service enables him to "get off the mark" as well as he would did he adopt the more orthodox position of left shoulder towards the net. His first service is a fine fast effort, but not sufficiently varied as regards pace, length, place, or work. His second has not too good a length and gets up too high. I do not think that Riseley, especially on the fore-hand, gets half the benefit of his fine physique. As with nearly every player, his service comes into his smash, and he loses many a shot through facing it too squarely and simply throwing his body forward, instead of being sideways on and transferring his weight as he makes the shot, or else stepping on to his work.

S. H. Smith of the famous fore-hand drive was not, I think, quite at his best this year. Certainly in the

Doubles final he was far from it, and was quite off his stroke. His drive, although I do not think it is played in good form, is most effective. There is a considerable amount of effort. Last year Smith was, I think, driving better, and when he got his shot in, the gallery said, "O-oh!" When he did not they smiled audibly. Smith volleyed more this year than last, and played some very fine overhead volleys, one of which is reproduced in this volume. He is a sterling player and has won many events, including (with Riseley) the Doubles Championship of England in 1902.

Now, without in the very slightest degree detracting from the merit of Smith and Riseley's victory over the Dohertys in that year, I say that with proper tactics the latter should never have been beaten. I knew that it could only have happened in one way, and I took the trouble to confirm at first hand my ideas, when I found that the weakness I am continually crying out against—the weakness which the Dohertys themselves, unwittingly perhaps, write against,¹ but do not correct in their own play, namely, standing too far away from the net—was what led to their downfall, for Smith and Riseley were on their game, and the stuff which came to hand, or rather "to feet," was too hot for the usual treatment. This should really have caused some alteration in the game; and I hope that, now the consensus of opinion of the leading Tennis writers seems to be in favour of the tactics indicated in the footnote, we shall have less loitering on the service-line.

¹ *R. F. and H. L. Doherty on Lawn Tennis*, page 35: "Make your opponents volley up; be yourself always in a position to hit down."

A. W. Gore's great stroke is his fore-hand drive, and when he is "on it," it is a great shot. Gore won the Championship of England in 1901, beating R. F. Doherty, who had held it for the preceding four years. Gore is a bit of a marvel. He has been playing Lawn Tennis for close on a quarter of a century, and they cannot reckon him "out of it" at any time now. He plays almost entirely from the base-line, which I don't like, and I am convinced he could do really well if he liked to volley. His service is sometimes delivered with the face of the racket almost shut—in other words, slanting on or glancing across the ball—and he relies too much on his arm. Also, he frequently puts the ball up too far in front. There is very little body in the stroke. He carries these characteristics into his smash. He stands too far back ; he doesn't swing on to it, nor does he open the face of his racket enough. With attention to these details, Gore's overhead work could be as good as anyone's. This may sound as though I thought I only had to say it to make it so ; I shall give a little corroborative evidence in favour of my statement.

In talking over with Gore the matter of smashing, I expressed my opinion very strongly and decidedly on the point, for he is a well-built, hard, active player with a good eye, and it always seems ridiculous to me that he doesn't volley. No one could make me believe that he cannot, after what I have seen him do in a double, if he paid attention to these matters.

During the course of a match against Oxford University, at Oxford, I was watching Gore, when suddenly a lob came to him about half-way down the

three-quarter court. Gore went for it in irreproachable style, stood under it, opened the face of his racket, gave it body, and put that lob away in a manner that, in my opinion, settled absolutely that if he doesn't take on overhead work it is not because he cannot. I was two courts away, but I distinctly heard Gore's chuckle, and "What would Vaile say if he had seen that?" and I was able to tell him later on.

I say that if Gore, even at this late hour, took on volleying seriously, there are less likely things than that he would repeat his performance of 1901.

H. S. Mahony has not been doing himself justice, I think, this season. When I look at Mahony playing his strokes I always think he ought to be about fifteen better than he is. He plays a fine back-hand smash, and also has a fore-hand which is not always treated with the respect that it deserves. About eighteen inches more swing back, and it would be a fine shot. This seems to me the only stroke Mahony makes where he does not use his body to the best advantage. This is strange, for the "handling" of his weight is quite a feature of Mahony's play. He has an excellent service with lots of lift which he is assiduously endeavouring to turn into "American," and he will no doubt succeed, when, I think, from the way he shapes at it, he will be distinctly awkward. Mahony's back-hand smash is very good, and is, I suppose, quite the best in England. I sometimes think that Mahony would play an infinitely better game if he adopted what I call the natural hold; but possibly he has tried it and found it not suitable for him, for he tries nearly everything which gives the

least sign of possessing merit or tending to improve the game. His back-hand off the ground is good, but he gets cut on instead of lift, and this is, I think, a serious defect.

George W. Hillyard, without a doubt, is one of the finest double players in the kingdom, and in my opinion stands very near the top of the tree. His game has that most desirable quality in a double player—severity. His return of the service is, I think, quite the best I know. It might perhaps be better if he could vary it by quick-dropping cross-court shots, but he gets the ball so high, and hits it down so hard and fast, that frequently the moment it has passed the net it is coming down at a great pace and is most difficult to deal with. Hillyard's private court is generally considered to be the finest in England. His background is perfect, and so is the surface; and after being accustomed to this, I do not wonder that when he gets a court that kicks a little, and a background of white blouses, it "puts him off" a bit.

W. and H. Baddeley form quite an interesting pair. I take them together for several reasons. Firstly, I have never seen either of them play a single; secondly, if I tried to describe the strokes of one it is almost a certainty that I should graft them on to the other; and, thirdly, the strokes of one are practically the strokes of the other.

I cannot call to mind a single stroke of either of the brothers which calls for special mention beyond any other, nor can I put my hand on any particular weakness which requires "pulverising," always excepting the distance which they stand from the net.

I do not know another pair of equal all-round excellence in strokes, and the correct production thereof. Here are no "freak shots," but the best results are obtained by an intelligent use of the body and limbs in a natural manner. The main fault in their game would seem to me to be almost a lack of rotation, although as they take the ball at the top of the bound and sweep "right through it" they frequently quite naturally get a little. Besides this, they do not, I think, either in volleying or ground work use the sharp cross-court angles enough. Rotation is such a help to this end that it is a standing marvel to me how little it is understood in England.

They seem to me to be a little soft on their back-hand, but as they do not, in my opinion, hold their rackets so as to get the best results, I am quite prepared for that.

Brame Hillyard is a player of whom, I regret to say, I have not seen much. That has been my bad luck. As in the case of his namesake, George W. Hillyard, I have never seen him play a single. I saw him, however, in a double at the All-England Championship meeting, and I was particularly struck by the manner in which he finished his smash. I do not remember another which has pleased me so much. I refer to the time between the impact of the ball and the finish of the stroke, a time of the utmost importance, yet scarcely considered by Tennis writers. Golfers know the importance of it, and there are reams of writing showing how it is best, after you have played your shot, to stand on the side of your left foot and scratch the ground with the toe of your right boot, and your back

with the toe of your club. It seemed to me from what little I saw of Hillyard's finish that it was truer and cleaner than anything else I have seen, and the result of the stroke, generally speaking, was excellent.

M. J. G. Ritchie is a very even player. His game is exceptionally balanced. He is sound at all points, brilliant in none. He holds his racket both fore- and back-hand in a natural grip, and gets good results from it. I think a knowledge of rotation, particularly on the fore-hand, would make a wonderful difference to Ritchie's game.

G. A. Caridia has, I think, been "put through his facings" elsewhere, but I must in passing again call attention to the crispness and effectiveness of his back-hand volley and half-volley which are obtained from a natural hold.

G. M. Simond is a fine natural player who serves a good length fast first service with frequently a scorching second. He plays with almost a plain face racket, and meets the ball very truly. He and Caridia put up a great game against H. L. Doherty and George W. Hillyard for the Covered Court Doubles Championship. I cannot call to mind a finer double during the last year.

C. H. L. Cazalet I have not seen in a single, but he plays a fine double, his low back-hand volleying and his smashing, for which he uses the fore-hand cut, being very fine.

P. de Borman, one of the Belgian representatives, was to me one of the most interesting players at the meeting. I do not know that he has a single perfect stroke, yet in every shot he made there was education

for him who was able to take it. At the risk of repeating myself a little, I must refer to his play a trifle more fully than I have done. His service, properly delivered, is unquestionably one of the finest changes known in the game, and I marvel to see it unused in England. It is, however, in de Borman's fearfully exaggerated fore-hand drive that the chief educative value of his play comes in. The amount of lift that he puts into this is excessive, is obtained with undue physical strain, and, as a matter of fact, is in one respect at least a distinct detriment, for it, as played by him, materially retards the pace of the ball.

It must, however, have struck anyone who watched him playing, how remarkably the ball dived for the base-line or side-line when it looked like going feet out; how in his cross-court shots time and again his opponents allowed the ball to pass them, only to have the chagrin of seeing the lift assert itself and the ball dive into court; how, when his opponents were waiting for a volley, de Borman's ball would come to the net and dive suddenly at their feet a yard short of what they calculated as its flight, thus forcing a half-volley instead of a volley, a defensive instead of an offensive shot; how even then the ball had such "stacks of running side," or, to use the right term, lift, that the moment it touched the tentatively-extended racket of the deceived would-be volleyer—it took its side and came off at a higher angle than was intended—an angle that, had de Borman been a volleyer and realised the strength of his imperfections, might speedily have been turned to advantage. All these and many more points stood clearly out in de Borman's game; yet once, when I ventured to say that

he played a most instructive game, I think my friend, who didn't know an E.G.M. from a Doherty, thought I was wandering. De Borman's great rotation produces a very long bound. Is it no advantage to have at your command a stroke to use occasionally when you want, on centre theory, say, to force your man as far back as you can, so as to close up the angles of the court to him?

I saw de Borman dealing with one player who would be offended were you to suggest that his knowledge of the game is not extensive. He wanted to volley de Borman, and quite naturally de Borman didn't want him to. This player ran to the usual place where kind English players accommodate one another by placing their returns, that is just inside the service-line, but de Borman, who evidently does not understand this point of honour, sent his "short divers" over the net to such purpose that he gathered in sixteen games running.

This player, had he understood things, would have raced right up to the net the moment he saw de Borman's right arm stiffen towards the ground. This was an unmistakable advertisement of the shot, and, directly that was shown, "right back or right up" was the game, and to reduce it to one "right up."

At p. 71, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, I wrote: "I have never seen a player deliberately attempt to use the lifting stroke for a lob, but I am certain 'it is there' nevertheless, for of course the mechanical principles of such a lob and a drive are exactly similar, and I have seen so many fine fast deceptive lobs played off this stroke, by miss-hits or through exaggerated lift,

that I could not but be struck by its possibilities in the hands of a skilful exponent."

Directly I saw de Borman play a fore-hand stroke I said to myself, "Here is the man who has done it."

I asked him, and he told me that he had in a mixed double used it with great success. The beauty of it, of course, is that well played it is absolutely the fastest lob known to the science of the game, and, unlike an ordinary lob, does not wait for you, but bounds away very fast directly it lands. If it passes you it beats you. An ordinary lob does not of necessity do so.

W. V. Eaves still plays a fine game, and were he to train would be quite dangerous. He serves the "American" service very well. He does not get the utmost twist, but this I always say is generally unadvisable, with the majority of English rackets almost impossible, with the Doherty absolutely so. He gets most of his work from his arm, and I am inclined to think that unless you want very much rotation it saves you considerably to do so. Eaves is very successful with his service, as, remarkable as it may seem, so few players think of standing away, letting it bound, and playing it on the fore-hand after it has had its break. He plays a cross-court cut stroke off the ground on his fore-hand. He should get the lifting stroke.

G. C. Ball-Greene cuts nearly everything, service and otherwise. This is, I think, not advisable, as it tends to make one's game slow. He serves a nasty cut service (Plates LIII. and LIV.) which keeps low and so bothers some of those who like a high-bounding ball.

He played de Borman and found his returns most awkward to negotiate. It was cut on lift, and of course dissimilar cuts accentuate rotation, while similar ones answer and check it (p. 80, *Modern Lawn Tennis*). In this case the rotation, already excessive, was increased by Ball-Greene's stroke, and so the return was rendered very inaccurate. Ball-Greene told me of his match and spoke of the remarkable behaviour of the ball. When I pointed out the reason, he recognised that there was more in it than the false bounds; and of course there must be a great variety in the bound of any player's returns where much rotation is used.

I am mentioning these little circumstances because it was quite remarkable to notice how de Borman, the object-lesson of the 1904 Wimbledon Tournament (for those who are able to learn), played into about half the figures in *Modern Lawn Tennis* which deal with rotation of the ball. He has excessive rotation. The English player has practically none.

De Borman's weakest point is his volleying. He is an exception to the general rule that a player's overhead volley is almost the same as his service. It is very strange to see de Borman waiting for an overhead smash when one remembers his service. Look at the photographs of the latter. His weight is thrown well back on to his right leg, and his shoulder is properly drooped. This is the way he should come at his smash, and "serve it over the net," but, of course, with about half the cut he usually employs. If he does this, he has as good a smash as anyone, and certainly a more deceptive one than there is in England. At present he stands with elevated racket, and with both feet pointing to the

net, and at the same distance from it, a picture of impotence, to anyone acquainted with the fundamental rules of good overhead work.

De Borman holds the leather or knob of his racket inside his hand, as so many players did long ago. He has expressed his intention of changing his grip. I doubt if he will find it improves his game. Certainly if he adopts the prevalent English grip it will not, and it will settle his service, and spoil a lot of his "work" on the ball.

W. Lemaire, Belgium's other representative, has quite the opposite fault to de Borman's. He hits the ball hard and straight, and has to trust to a very low trajectory to find the base-line. This game is only fit for "miracles," and they don't play Lawn Tennis nowadays. If he could take half of de Borman's lift it would make a marvellous improvement in their games. His back-hand is a clean straight shot played close to his leg and followed straight through, but on account of the low hard hitting, which often finds the net, he is not good at sharp cross-court passing shots, that invaluable portion of the game so sadly neglected in England. It was quite a relief to me to see Eaves playing a few of them instead of hitting the ball straight back down the court to his opponents. He scored on them repeatedly in the final for the Doubles Championship of London.

R. B. Hough, Champion of Wales, is an old and tried warrior. He belongs to the "die-hards," and, so long as there is an ace to be gathered in, it behoves his opponent to be after it all he knows, otherwise he may

chance not to get it, for Hough has never lost a match until the other fellow has won it. He has won over a hundred prizes in championships and handicaps, and his name is inscribed on the roll of honour in nearly every continental centre of Lawn Tennis. Hough faces the net rather too much in his service. He throws the ball up, I think, a little too far in front, instead of, as it should be, above his head or right ear, and falls forward on to it. His body never goes back beyond the perpendicular, and it should. I have seen Hough play some nice low fore-hand volleys with a bit of lift on them. If he would use the same stroke for his fore-hand drive and put a bit of body-weight into it, and remember that, as usual, the defect of his service enters into his overhead volley, it would work a great improvement in his game.

W. C. Crawley plays a very fine game at times. In the Open Singles Championship of Northumberland he beat S. H. Smith two sets to one, and in doing so showed a lot of head-work. He has a nice easy style, and, having the advantage of youth, should make his mark in the world of Tennis.

Anthony Wilding is a promising player. Young, and of good physique, he is inclined to be a little generous with his strength, especially on his fore-hand. He has put up some capital performances. In the Open Singles Championship of Northumberland he beat Eaves and gave S. H. Smith quite a shake. It was a three-set go, and the score was called "Set all 4-2, Wilding leads." When age and a few more defeats have imported more strategy into his game he will be a

player to be reckoned with when we are "sorting out" the championship list. In dealing with his photographs I have referred to some of his failings. I did not see many of his singles, but in those I did see he did not take advantage of his youth and condition to attack as vigorously as he should have done, and he disregards centre theory too much.

Anthony Norris, Editor of *Lawn Tennis and Croquet*, finds that literary work and Lawn Tennis do not form a perfect combination. Norris has put up some capital performances. His chief fault, so far as I can see, is that he nearly always gets too close in to the flight of the ball on his fore-hand. It seems to me as though he is trying to play a ball with the faulty English grip, which would be quite easy to take with a natural one. You cannot with the English grip play properly a ball right by your leg—the more I think of this grip the less I like it. Norris is very quick "off the mark"—so quick, in fact, that he is accused of "beating the pistol." He certainly looks like it far oftener than he does it. I had to watch him during one match. As is well known, I call foot-faults even at some risk, but I only got him once, and that was for "both feet off ground."

G. Greville plays a great game at times. He gave Riseley a good five-set go in the Singles before he "went out" at Wimbledon, and in the final of the Doubles Championship of London, when he and Mann played R. F. Doherty and Eaves, his play was for the first two sets quite the soundest of the four. He throws his ball up too far in front of him frequently when serving, always faces the net too much, and does

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not put his weight on to his right leg before serving. His delivery suffers considerably in consequence of these defects. His low volleying is generally very good, and he treats most of his smashes very summarily. He is always an awkward man to beat. When pressed he lobs well.

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OLLA PODRIDA

I have endeavoured to impress upon my readers that it is most undesirable to become so full of theory that it will interfere with their practice. I should think that the greater one's knowledge of music, the greater would be the enjoyment to be derived from playing the very best that one is capable of. So it seems to me it should be with anything that is worth knowing or playing ; but once the knowledge begins to worry you, there is a screw loose somewhere.

Theories should be certain thoughts which you have thought so often, that when the occasion arises for them to be put into action they come naturally "to hand."

I shall give you an instance of what I mean, although you cannot exactly, perhaps, call these theories. I have certain good rules which I lay down for my conduct and welfare in life, of which the following are examples :

In case of fire in a crowded building, sit still and wait for the fire-brigade—unless you can get a clear run out.

In the event of the horse attached to your vehicle bolting, sit still and await developments—unless you can scramble out behind, and know how to do it.

In the event of becoming involved in a heated

argument, remember that the "point" and the "solar-plexus" are excellent means for logical re-duction—if your premises are right.

Now, I have not had occasion to try the first. The second I have experienced more than once, and as it happened in a hansom cab, where it is inconvenient to get out at the back, I followed my rule with very satisfactory results.

The third also came to me, as it does generally to all men, and again I applied my theories in a "pointed" manner with excellent results.

Now, I did not worry to think that I had many times thought these thoughts, nor to think where I first got them, nor out of whose head, nor from what book they came. All I knew or cared about was that they were with me when I wanted them—and they were useful. So it should be with theory. It should be assimilated so that when the occasion arises the answer to it is immediately suggested—not Fig. 27, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, or Plate CVIII., *Great Lawn Tennis Players*, but just your own idea of what is best to do, irrespective of where it came from. This is "practical" theory. If you have to think of the book it is time either to burn it, or to leave your play and learn sufficient to enable you to burn it without feeling the loss.

I have read nearly every book that has been written on the game, I believe, and have written two myself, but if I caught myself thinking of books when I saw a ball coming at me I should know it was getting nearly time for me to give the game best.

I have in various places dealt very fully with the bad position of the striker-out's partner, in doubles,

which is generally taken up in England. I cannot conceive why players continue to do it. I think it is utterly opposed to common sense for the vast majority of players. It nearly cost R. F. Doherty and Eaves the Metropolitan Championship Doubles at Queen's. After a while Doherty saw this error was "beating" them, and it was very amusing to me to hear him calling Eaves back, when the latter, from force of habit, started to wend his way into the service court; and it must be remembered that there are not many better low-volleyers than Eaves. Doherty himself stood back while Eaves was receiving. Given two pairs of equal strength, the two who during striking out stand back together, and go up together, will win every time against the two who allow the striker-out's partner to be in the service court. The position is only justifiable on the theory that the striker-out is capable of making a nearly perfect return every stroke (which is really a very wild theory), and also when you are playing people who hold their rackets in such a manner and stand in such a position that a cross-court "kill" is eliminated from their list of strokes.

A word on foot-faults will not be out of place here. These are passed to an alarming extent, and some players almost deliver their service as they are running up. This is most unfair, especially to a base-liner.

If both are "cribbing" all they can, one need not waste any sympathy, but to the base-liner it is distinctly unfair, and in any case tends to spoil the game. There ought to be greater strictness in this respect. The present foot-fault rule is admittedly very defective.

For instance, R. F. Doherty often takes his stand,

then raises his left foot, puts it down, and serves—raising his right toe from the ground just before he hits the ball. Under the present rule I should unhesitatingly foot-fault him for a walking start. I did this in the United States Covered Court Finals, and they could not understand it. Many players disagree with my ruling, but “the” referee of England agrees with it. The rule should be altered. In the Covered Court Championships I had to foot-fault Ritchie, much to his chagrin, because several times he was, quite inadvertently, about two inches off the ground, but well clear of the base-line. I think this is positively silly. If a man could leap six feet and deliver his service I should let him do it. He only expends energy and loses time in following up for every inch he gets off the court, so I cannot here see any room for abuse.

I think the rule should be drawn so that a player shall take his stand before serving, and that thereafter he shall not take more than one step before he hits the ball, and that both his feet shall be behind the base-line anywhere at time of service—ten feet up in the air if he thinks it any advantage and can get there.

I am afraid that some may think that my criticism of English play is too sweeping, but I can only write as things seem to me, and I think I see signs of a great tendency to develop the solid, safe game. We do not want to make it funereal. We want to make it more brilliant and attractive.

I feel somewhat in the same position as regards English players as the old Scotch woman who said, on taking her lad aside for correction, “Jamesie, I lo’e ye, but I maun thrash ye.” (Scotch not guaranteed.)

I feel, however, that it would be a mistake to allow any personal feelings to interfere with my judgment, and, indeed, I feel sure that such a course would not be appreciated. I have in all cases said what I think, in many cases not so strongly as I think it.

Some who do not read carefully might imagine that zeal or enthusiasm for the Colonies has slightly warped my judgment. I am from New Zealand. I should like to say that in nothing I have ever written have I compared New Zealand Tennis with English to the detriment of the latter, because to do so would, I think, be wrong; but I do compare Australian, and I have no connection whatever with Australia.

I should prefer to be able to say and think that England is pre-eminent. We are dropping quite enough without doing our best to heave away the Lawn Tennis Championships. I went to Wimbledon last year prepared for a treat, thinking I should be able to go back to the other end of the world and tell my club-mates what Lawn Tennis was really like. I was so disappointed that I mistrusted my judgment. I had another look this year, and I don't mistrust it any more. Even New Zealand has nothing whatever to learn from England in strokes and tactics—indeed, it is probably the other way; but in plain, safe, solid execution—that is another story.

We had in New Zealand a few years ago a very fine player, J. R. Hooper, at that time Champion of the Colony. Mr. E. G. Meers, who often played him, says that he considers him the most scientific player he ever opposed, and he says that taking his form then it would not require any handicap to bring Hooper and the best

in England together. Nor was he far wrong. On Hooper's form then, and that of the Champion of the World to-day, I should have been inclined to allow a little difference ; but of this I am certain—that, had Hooper been in England, at the end of a season's play there would not have been any to give him much in the way of points. In this case, which is the only one where I might be influenced by feelings of pride of country, you have Mr. E. G. Meers' opinion, and I do not know many that I should take before his : I am therefore pleased to have his authority to repeat his words, for although these statements are, after all, only the opinions of fallible men, they are really all we have to rely on at present. There is not in England to-day a player with Hooper's *répertoire* of strokes, his ease and correctness of action, and his accuracy of placing. His only fault was a strong tendency to rely on placing to score his overhead chances ; but then he did place as placing is not understood here. He had about double the number of strokes of any player in England, and each was used in its right place. Unfortunately, his health failed, and he had to give strenuous Tennis best in favour of more placid golf.

Besides Hooper we have another player, whom, with less than a season's coaching, I should consider fit to play anyone in England, with a great chance of success. His tactics are at present lacking, but he has every stroke in the game—except the American service, which he can easily learn—and he possesses many natural advantages ; moreover, he will by this time probably have read *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and have learnt the error of wanting to win off every ball, and disregarding

centre theory! There I stop, and that is surely not saying very much for New Zealand. At present there is only one player to whom I would give a place in an Australasian team, and that would not be on his knowledge of the game, nor on his present form, but on what I know him to be capable of doing if properly handled.

It is different, however, in Australia. They have a larger population and greater facilities for playing, and they undoubtedly have some very fine players. There are in New Zealand quite a number of very good players, but unfortunately they are so scattered that as a rule they only meet for a few days at the annual championship meeting, and so are rarely if ever seen at their best.

I had intended to include herein a long chapter on "Individuality in Lawn Tennis," showing how a player should, especially if he finds his own game to be failing against his adversary, so adapt his game as to deprive his opponent of his best strokes, to perhaps turn the strength of his stroke into the weakness thereof; in other words, to show how by carefully analysing your adversary's methods you may, by spoiling his best point, or perhaps some minor one, make such a breach in the ramparts of his defences that the carrying of the citadel by assault becomes quite an easy matter. I had wished to do this and to give illustrations, but I am afraid I must deny myself the pleasure, and content myself with one example, and by telling you that without any doubt the most effective way of doing this is by a thorough knowledge of rotation, how it is produced,

and what it does when it is produced. It is this rotation, so neglected by Lawn Tennis players, so prized by cricketers, baseballers, and billiardists, used and understood even by golfers—where it is, comparatively speaking, but slightly required—that will the most readily enable you to break up any man's game; and until you have realised that, and given up holding your racket like an axe-handle, you will not be beginning to play scientific Lawn Tennis with natural and effective shots which give you the full advantage of your strength of mind and body.

I shall now give you one instance of what I mean by individuality.

I think there is little doubt that G. A. Caridia, Champion of Wales, is the finest half-volleyer in the world. Deprive him of his half-volley, and you make a fearful gap in his defences.

I had heard a lot about Caridia's half-volleying, but did not see him playing until the Covered Court Championships were being decided this year. I went out specially to watch him play this stroke. Before I went I had made up my mind that in all probability he would watch the ball on to his racket, as practically no one else does in this stroke.

Have you ever tried to watch and detect a really good half-volleyer lifting his eye? Probably not. I can promise you it almost requires two pairs of eyes with the same brain working behind them.

I had seen some sixty or seventy half-volleys before I had satisfied myself about Caridia's "secrets," and these are :

1. That he keeps his eye on the ball longer than

any other player, although even he rarely if ever sees it on to his racket as he should.

2. That he corrects the rising tendency of the ball by inclining the face of his racket forward, as shown at Fig. 9 of *Modern Lawn Tennis*.

I watched Caridia most carefully, and I am quite convinced that he rarely sees the ball right on to his racket. I actually saw his eyes lift repeatedly when they had gauged the flight of the ball, so that he knew, or thought he knew, that it must find the centre of his racket. Twice I saw the ball go "clean through his racket." Then I was satisfied.

This was during the match between G. M. Simond and Caridia, and H. L. Doherty and George W. Hillyard, to my mind the most interesting double I have seen in England, as it contained infinitely more of the real science of the double than one generally sees in similar matches here. Caridia's half-volleying and back-hand volleying were brilliant and severe ; Simond's volleying was safe and crisp, and occasionally his smashing was very good, while both he and Caridia used the much-neglected "little angles" of the court very effectively. H. L. Doherty was as usual sure, served very well, and, when necessary, smashed as few but he can, while George W. Hillyard, although a little lame, did all that was asked of him, serving splendidly and centring his deliveries in good style, while he put the over-head stuff away in a manner that left nothing to be desired. Given perfect surroundings, such as he is accustomed to, and I would not care to name a better all-round "smasher" from any part of the court than George W. Hillyard.

However, I am wandering a little from this matter of "Individuality in Lawn Tennis." When I see a man with a perfect stroke, or indeed a particularly strong one, I always set myself to find a way to neutralise that stroke, and immediately I saw Caridia's perfect half-volley, it came into my unscrupulous mind that I could ruin it more easily than I could many a more faulty stroke, and I decided that I should see how it came off if I had the pleasure of meeting him across the net.

Now most of you have heard how Bill Adams won the Battle of Waterloo, but very few of you have heard "How P. A. Vaile bottled Caridia's half-volley," and as the latter is of infinitely more importance to you, and much newer, I shall risk boring you with a short account of it.

Caridia was waiting with me at Queen's Club one morning to undergo Mr. Beldam's attentions. I had made up my mind that I would not play, for firstly, I was quite unfit to do so ; secondly, I wanted to be fit for the photographer ; and thirdly, I did not want to expose my horrible "form," after two years' sloth, for it was bad enough to show it to the camera, let alone to a man who knows what good tennis is ; but Caridia knocked me over a ball, and then I forgot the other matters, and set myself to break up his half-volley.

We had a very pleasant set before we had to stop for business. Caridia beat me 6—4, and I cannot remember that he returned one half-volley in the ten games. If he did, it was quite ineffective.

It occurred to me that as Caridia inclines his racket

forwardly, as no one else does properly, that any ball with backward rotation must necessarily have a greater tendency to find the ground than it would have coming off a racket held with a vertical face. Carrying this idea out, wherever I saw a chance, I played to make Caridia half-volley, but chopped (Fig. 24, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) "hard and heavy." This stroke produces the bound shown in the third illustration in Fig. 25A, *Modern Lawn Tennis*. It will be seen at once that this bound is entirely different from the bound of a ball struck with a plain face, which is shown in the first illustration of Fig. 25A.

Now Caridia is accustomed to timing plain balls with natural bound, so, although I was not playing the shot with my usual accuracy, I gave him balls with excess of backward rotation and a low shooting bound. He followed this ball with his eye as far as he usually does, but directly he lifted his eye that ball, according to the standard of propriety set by English balls, misbehaved itself. It shot low and fast, got to the racket more quickly than a plain ball, took the face of the racket away from the centre, and therefore on "deader" string, and it got its check side (Fig. 18, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) to work with greater effect than if Caridia's racket had been vertical. In other words, Caridia's shot, which is, generally speaking, played in perfect form for the class of balls he is accustomed to deal with, was rendered an absolutely imperfect one, for to meet my stroke he required to use the vertical face, if not indeed to have the head of the racket inclined to be nearer the net than the splice. I am speaking now of Caridia's usual clean, straight half-volley.

Of course, I have no doubt that in a short time Caridia would have dropped to my little game, but there is always the chance that he might not have, and in any case, had it been a match and had I been in form, I should have been deriving the benefit of my start.

Let us suppose that Caridia had fathomed my wiles, I should then have given him the lift, and unless he had altered the angle of his racket skilfully, and timed the quick-dropping ball very accurately, he would have put his half-volleys up to me at the net.

This was a mere knock-up, but it serves to show what I mean by "Individuality in Lawn Tennis," and I have Caridia's permission (after reading the account of the incident) to mention it as an illustration of the advantages of rotation in altering the character of an opponent's stroke, and even turning the perfection of his shot into the weakness thereof.

Until English players learn to watch the ball *right on to the racket*, and to hold the racket and play naturally as Caridia does, his half-volley will continue to remain the unattainable object of their respectful envy.

AFTERWORD

And now once more it is time to go. I shall see some of you again soon. Wherever I go in my wanderings round this little world I meet good fellows I have played—but alas ! never worked—with. From New Zealand to England, from the East to the West, in the most forsaken and unlikely deserts and in the most populous and delightful places, I have continually to exchange reminiscences of some great tussle we have had at football, cricket, golf, tennis, or perhaps something which at the time we considered more serious, and I am almost tempted at times to say, “The Play, the Play’s the thing !”—and I really am afraid that with the British, if it is not “the” thing, it is a very large proportion of it. However, so long as you play vigorously and with dash enough to retain the Lawn Tennis Championships of the World in England, until they go to the Antipodes, I shall excuse you if you “poach” a few hours from the office, and in the meantime shall say again—hoping you will enjoy the perusal of this volume, and the reminiscences the photographs will conjure up—

AU REVOIR !

ADVANCED TACTICS OF THE SINGLE GAME

By E. G. MEERS

I have been asked to write a short article on the strategy of the game. In doing so I shall address myself only to those who have attained enough skill to entitle them to play in First Class Handicaps, as it is obvious that it is of little use to teach a player where to put the ball, and why it should be put there, if he has not sufficient skill to be able generally to do this.

Of course, if you are a first-class player, and your opponent weaker by, say, fifteen or more, you can, with ordinary care, win comfortably enough, with about as much or as little trouble as you choose to take.

But if you are opposed to a player of equal, or nearly equal skill, the problem of how to beat him is much more difficult of solution, and will tax to the utmost all your resources, both mental and physical.

It appears necessary, for the purpose of this article, to classify or divide the different styles of play as follows :—

- I. Base-line play against base-line play.
- II. Base-line play against all-round play.
- III. All-round play against all-round play.

I prefer to say "all-round" instead of simply "volley," as a player who is simply a volleyer and is weak off the ground is not a first-class player ; and his fate, when he enters the lists against a first-class base-line player, is certain defeat, and my advice to him is simply to go and learn to play off the ground.

First of all we will take :

I.—*Base-line play against base-line play.*

We will suppose that you are about to start your match.

Before you do so, it should have occurred to you to take most careful notice of the direction and force of the wind, if any ; of the position of the sun, if any ; also of any slope of the court ; and also of the character of the background (for you must not expect to play your best game against a bad background).

You will have noted also whether the surface of the court is good or bad—for you must, as a base-line player, be prepared for many disappointments from false bounds—and the best way to meet them is to be prepared for them ; and, if you cannot make a stroke off them, lob, or play for safety only, as best you can.

Also, recall to your recollection the known points of strength or weakness of your opponent (and these points about each other are well known to all first-class players), and make use of that knowledge whenever the opportunity occurs.

As to the wind—if down the court, remember always whether you are lobbing with it, or against it : that if

you are playing against it, or if it blows across the court, you can make use of it to get your service placed so that it will bound well outside the court, so as to get your opponent out of position—especially is this so if you can supply a twist service, breaking either way.

As to the sun—when shining down the court, it merely makes one side much more difficult than the other to play from; but, when shining across the court, may be made use of by remembering for yourself to tempt your opponent (by leaving that side a little more open when no other danger threatens) to place the ball as often as possible on the side from you away from the sun, and to try to place your own return on the sunny side of your opponent; it being more difficult to make accurate returns from the sunny side of you than from the other.

As to the slope of the court—it is obvious that, other things being equal, a ball played downhill anywhere will have far more pace on it after it leaves the ground than when played uphill; it is useful to always bear this in mind, as a ball swift enough to clean pass a man down a very slight slope will not always do so *up* that slope; it will generally kick, and wait for him.

With all these things well in the fore-front of your mind, and a determination to keep them there for instant use as occasion offers, as well as a determination to let no untoward circumstances put you out or disturb your attention from the game, we will assume that you are now going to start.

In serving, remember that a good length and good placing are better than severity at the expense of many

faults. Try and make the striker-out move to take your service, or try to put him out of position by it. A very fast first service, unless it generally "comes off," does not, I think, pay. It is very tiring, and most people want all their strength, especially towards the end of a match. Besides, I am of opinion that in delivering a very fast first-service you are apt to get a bit fixed on your feet, and then the return being back so quickly you have not the time to start to get into position to take it; in fact, you cannot start so quickly in any direction after delivering a very swift service as you can after delivering one of moderate pace.

If you give a weak short service, it is liable to be killed straight away; more especially is this the case if you send it out at the side.

As to the correct place in which to stand to take the service, it will vary according to the position of the server and his probable intention, and will be obvious; but the attitude should be with the body leaning forward slightly, the racket held across the body in the right hand (with the grip for taking a back-hand stroke), and the "business end" lightly supported by the left hand. The knees should be slightly bent, the weight resting on the balls of the feet, ready to jump off in any direction. The eyes should be fixed on the ball as it is served, and the start to take it made the instant it has left the server's racket. This is, to my way of thinking, the only way of making sure of getting to some very fast services, and in any case it will afford you more time in which to make that important stroke, "the return of the service." The service having

been delivered, and, we will assume, too good to be killed, the rest has started, and you have to win the point if you can.

It is obvious that, if you content yourself with just returning the ball, anyhow and with bad length, your opponent may bombard you, and give you so little time that you will not be able to help giving him, when you are out of position, a return which he will kill, as this is perfectly easy for a first-class base-line player to do.

Your object must be—to yourself get the weak return to kill, or else to keep the ball going till your opponent knocks it into the net or out of court. It practically amounts to this. Between base-line players—apart from the power to work your opponent out of position, and thereby getting a chance to kill his return, that man will win who is the safer of the two ; therefore, try and induce your opponent to take more risks than you do, and try yourself to take less than he does. If you see he is sweet on a somewhat risky stroke, give him plenty of chances to try it ; also, if you notice in the course of play that he is weak in making returns from a particular part of the court, make *that* the place to try and put a ball when you have got him on the run : the chances are that the return will be still weaker, and you will get the opportunity you want. If, on the other hand, your opponent has got *you* on the run, and is only waiting for your weak return to pass you, you may very likely turn his advantage to your own by putting every return you make *across* the court, and not down the lines. The result of this is, that to keep you on the run your opponent has to keep taking the risk of placing every ball down the side lines, which is

dangerous, and likely to lead to his speedy breakdown.

I may here remark about back-court play that what I have said about the uselessness of hitting hard when there is no danger is ten times more apparent on a hot, fiery court, and if two base-line players go into court and only one of them makes up his mind to let the other do the hitting, he certainly wins. I repeat what I said before—let the other man take the risk.

II.—*Base-line player against all-round man.*

The only modification I have to make in the advice given to base-line player against base-line player would be to enable him to meet the extra danger of the volley, which, if not a kill, should put our base-line friend in such trouble as to give him no time to make a passing shot. Low trajectory is of much more importance against the volleyer than when playing against a base-line player, and unless you are so strong on the base-line that, like the late Mr. H. Chipp, you have no fear of the volleyer, but would rather “lure” him to the net so that you may either clean pass him, send one “at him and clean through him,” or lob over his head, you should endeavour by good length to keep him in the back of the court, and, making him play your game, trust to your superiority at it to win.

Now there is no use whatever in playing hard low shots into your opponent's court when he is well behind the middle of the base-line, and well able to start in any direction in which he sees your return coming; you are sure to knock one out, or into the net, sooner

or later. A slow ball right into the back of the court is a better return than a swift one in such a case, being less risky to make ; but it must be put into the *back* of the court ; in other words, “good *length*” is imperative.

If the volleyer has got to the net, my opinion is that it is rather a forlorn hope to attempt to clean pass him unless you are in front of the base-line, and even then it is dangerous to attempt it unless you do it from near one side-line or the other : a hot shot of this kind should only be attempted when you cannot do anything else. I might almost put it thus : from behind the base-line, lob ; from well in front of the base-line and up to the service-line, you may try and pass your opponent if you think you can do it ; and from in front of the service line, you should practically make certain of passing him.

In doing this, don't forget that it is easier to pass a man diagonally, by “crossing him” against the wind, than to do the same with the wind, although this is modified, of course, by the extra *time* he gets in one case, and the *pace* you get on the ball in the other.

Vary your strokes also as much as possible, so as to try and send the ball not where he expects it, but where he does not—this sort of thing gains many points.

Persistent lobbing, although disconcerting to an impatient player, invaluable as a defensive stroke, and almost invincible in a failing light, is, nevertheless, a confession of weakness, and as a rule would lose against good overhead play.

As to the volleyer against the base-line player, a few hints beyond those given to the ground player will

suffice, for if the base-line man be really good and his returns of low trajectory there won't be much volleying. Volleying against first-class base-line play should only be used to kill a weak return which you either see coming and have time to get at, or else when you see that your own return will of a certainty put the base-line player in trouble, then follow your return up and go in and win, if you can ; for instance, when (by preference against the wind) you drive a suitable return of his straight down the middle of the court and go in on it, if he does not then lob it takes a precious good (and fortunate) shot of his to get by you—and this instance holds good always : with your ball driven far down the middle of the court and with you at the net, the base-line man's chance of winning the stroke is not a rosy one.

However good base-line play is, if of high trajectory there is little hope of success against a good volleyer except by splendid length, keeping him in the back of the court, and by the judicious use of a good deal of lobbing ; both by ordinary tossing, and by low lobs just out of reach along the side-lines. Also there is little hope in any case for the base-line man on a bad court. Demoralisation soon sets in, and defeat follows.

III.—“*All-round*” man against “*all-round*” man.

I will say right here that the modern craze for racing to the net on all sorts of returns, good, bad, and indifferent, appears to me to be faulty, and not calculated to improve the scientific exposition of the game. Correct enough, no doubt, on a bad court and with

a nervous opponent, and especially disconcerting towards the end of a match—when you are physically strong enough to do it—and your opponent is tired, it should not, to my way of thinking, be the road to victory under perfect conditions. I frequently did it myself all the time I was strong enough to stand it, but I felt that it was wrong, and that it was a demonstration of my inability at times to play with sufficient precision off the ground.

Who ever came in on his service, with success, to Mr. Lawford, Mr. Chipp, Mr. Pim, Mr. W. Baddeley, Mr. D. G. Chaytor, or to others I could name? So far as I know, "*no one*." Nor could they now if players took the trouble to be more accurate off the ground.

However, running in is the fashion, and it appears to me to have resulted in "rushing tactics"—formidable, I admit—but productive of a great deal of disregard of good length, and the scientific placing with which the Renshaws, Pim, Baddeley, and others used to delight us. I think that my old opponent, Mr. H. S. Barlow, started it; and, owing to his exceptional quickness and strength, he met with considerable success.

There is little to say to the "all-round" man against the "all-round" man that has not been already said. The principal difference is that length of return is even more necessary in his case than when opposed to a base-line man; if he does not want his opponent at the net, his principal aim should be to get to the net first on a legitimate stroke—one that will prevent his opponent making anything but a defensive stroke in reply; he will probably then get a legitimate chance to kill. This desperate desire of getting to the net is

answerable for the present tendency, which is "get to the net, honestly (legitimately) if you can, but get to the net!"

In dealing with the man who runs in on his service, try not to let the fact of his doing so bustle you; if his service is very severe, he won't have time to get very far in (unless the umpire allows him to foot-fault, which unfortunately he often does), and under these circumstances he is sure to miss a good many of your returns. If not a hard service, it should not be difficult to place the ball on one side or the other of him. If the service should be a high bounding ball, the best way is to force it with some strength either across the court or down the side-lines. In running in on your own service or on a good return, an important thing is, I think, to be able to form a tolerably certain idea of what your opponent will try to do: some men seldom or never lob; you can in that case get close to the net.

Some men when hurried never make certain shots—one first-class man I know never tried to put a back-hander down his left-hand line when hustled; another never by any chance tried to cross a shot with his forehand.

When you know these failings, make use of them to the fullest extent. I used to win a lot of strokes that way. If you know a man will not try to place his return in any particular part of the court and you are running in, you can leave that part unprotected and cover the rest with ease.

On the other hand, this supplies another argument for variety of stroke: not only should you try to anticipate where your opponent would place your return

from actual knowledge of the game (which is or should be part of your equipment), but try to prevent him anticipating where you are going to put the ball.

The volleyer must also be prepared at all times to be ready to put his return in unlikely and unthought-of places ; it is not always possible to play a volley at close quarters hard enough to kill it, but if you can drop it the unlikely side of your opponent, even though it may be only a quarter of the width of the court, it will usually win the point, as he will be pretty surely going away from it in his anxiety to cover the part of the court he has left open.

Do not get *too* close to the net—my idea of the proper position is, say about seven feet behind it ; near enough for one step forward to be sufficient in most cases to enable you to “slaughter” a loose ball, but not so near that you cannot get back to deal with a lob.

In dealing with lobs, unless you are near enough to the net to kill right out absolutely, do not “smash” at all. As you see the ball approaching the position in which you are going to deal with it, carefully think of that portion of the court (mostly the back, unless your opponent is out of position) in which you desire to place it, and, as firmly as you can do so with certainty, put it there. Your opponent will probably only have the choice between lobbing again (being sure to give a weak one eventually) or of making a sort of “bash,” as your return will naturally have bounded high. This “bash,” more frequently than not, will not come off.

I always prefer to deal with a short, high lob by letting it bound before I try to kill it, as it is easier to get into the proper position for doing so, and there is

more time to be accurate, and so make the result a certainty.

In volleying with both men at the net, never "pat"—*hit*. Better hit the ball into the net or out of court than to give the opponent an easy one to devour. It makes him too pleased with himself, and increases his confidence.

General Remarks.

Do not be discouraged if on some days you appear to be unable to play your usual stroke off the ground, while you regretfully remember that it was only the other day you placed so well and accurately. If you are well and fit, and can find nothing to account for playing so badly, depend upon it, it is that the average bound of the ball is on that day some inches higher or lower than on the day you played so well, and does not suit your stroke so well.

Few people know what a tremendous difference the temperature of the air makes to the bound of a ball. Far more than the difference between a hard court and a softish one. When the ball is in play, never stand still; keep moving around, you can then start so much better for anywhere. Whether you are a base-line player or a volleyer, do not get caught hovering around that spot in the middle of the court halfway between the base-line and the service-line—it is "Tom Tiddler's ground," or "the place to lose from!" You can neither volley from there with success nor take any good length side-line strokes, while you can be passed with ease from anywhere. Also try to remember that

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the capacity for continued mental, as well as bodily effort, for concentrating the mind (to the exclusion of all other influences) on winning the points as they arise, and for taking defeats and annoyances in a sportsman-like and placid manner, is the chief factor in winning matches after a fair amount of executive skill and knowledge of the game has been acquired. So, if you are determined to win, cultivate those characteristics.

Lawn tennis is like most other things, and, although only a game, when it is seriously and properly played it is a valuable mental training, and you may be quite certain that the same characteristics which enable a man to win at lawn tennis, if properly applied help him to win in the more important game of life.

1. Don't see the ball
2. Keep your eye on it

THE HALF-VOLLEY

By G. A. CARIDIA

THE great majority of players use the half-volley purely as a defensive stroke, and do not attempt it unless in difficulties. The great value of a volley is that you save much time, and so give your opponent less time to get into position for your return. It follows, then, that the half-volley also possesses, though certainly in a less degree, this same important advantage over a ball taken at or after the top of its bound.

To half-volley perfectly one must have a very good surface, and I find that in this branch of the game my best work is done on the covered courts; but it is certainly possible for an accurate player to use the stroke with great effect on a good grass court. Unless the court is very bad, I have no hesitation in playing it.

I am inclined to think that nearly all Tennis players lift their eyes some time before the racket hits the ball, in every stroke, but in no stroke is this defect so apparent as in the half-volley. I ascribe whatever measure of success I may have achieved in playing this stroke to the fact that it is, with me, quite a natural one; and, moreover, I think I keep the ball "in my eye" a trifle longer than most players, and also get over it

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more, so as to cover its bound. This (as explained by Vaile in his book, *Modern Lawn Tennis*) is, I think, of the highest importance. Unless the blade of the racket is held forward at the time of making the stroke, if there is any pace on the ball it will fly up higher than you intend it to when returning it over the net, and will thus give your opponent an easy smash. If you want to get a good low return, you must smother the bound.

Some time ago I had an accident to my right shoulder. Previous to this I think I could half-volley with equal facility on either hand, but since then I find that I am much stronger and more accurate on my back-hand.

I always endeavour to hold my racket so that I get the ball truly in the centre of it, and so that I am enabled to follow through straight after the ball. In fact, I always use the grip so strongly advocated by Vaile, as I find that by so doing I can get the best results, especially in half-volleying, volleying, and playing a rising ball.

I think that the half-volley should be at the disposal of any player as an offensive stroke, and I believe that if the two most important requisites for the stroke, as above mentioned, are attended to, almost any player with a reasonably good eye could develop a very serviceable return.

Many players take a half-volley with arm-action only. I think this is wrong, and I always try, unless forced to take it when out of position, to come on to the ball with a natural, easy swing, and to use my body as I hit the ball, and then to follow through as though I were throwing my racket head after the ball.

This enables me to get started for the net as quickly as possible after I have played my stroke.

I take some of my half-volleys a little late, and they then practically become the drive off a rising ball. Here, again, it is quite essential that your racket should cover the rise of the ball, so as to prevent your return flying too high.

It is, to one accustomed to the stroke, comparatively easy to time the half-volley off a plain return, but it becomes quite another matter when you have to deal with a peculiar spinning return like de Borman's, which frequently drops perhaps a foot short of where you expect it to land, or when you are dealing with a stroke like Vaile's chop, which shoots a lot.

After having experienced both, I think the chop is the worse, for it shoots so low that it is hard to get it on to the centre of the racket; whereas, with de Borman's shot, when you get accustomed to the sudden drop, and equally sudden bound, it is only a question of applying still further the great secret of half-volleying and smothering the bound.

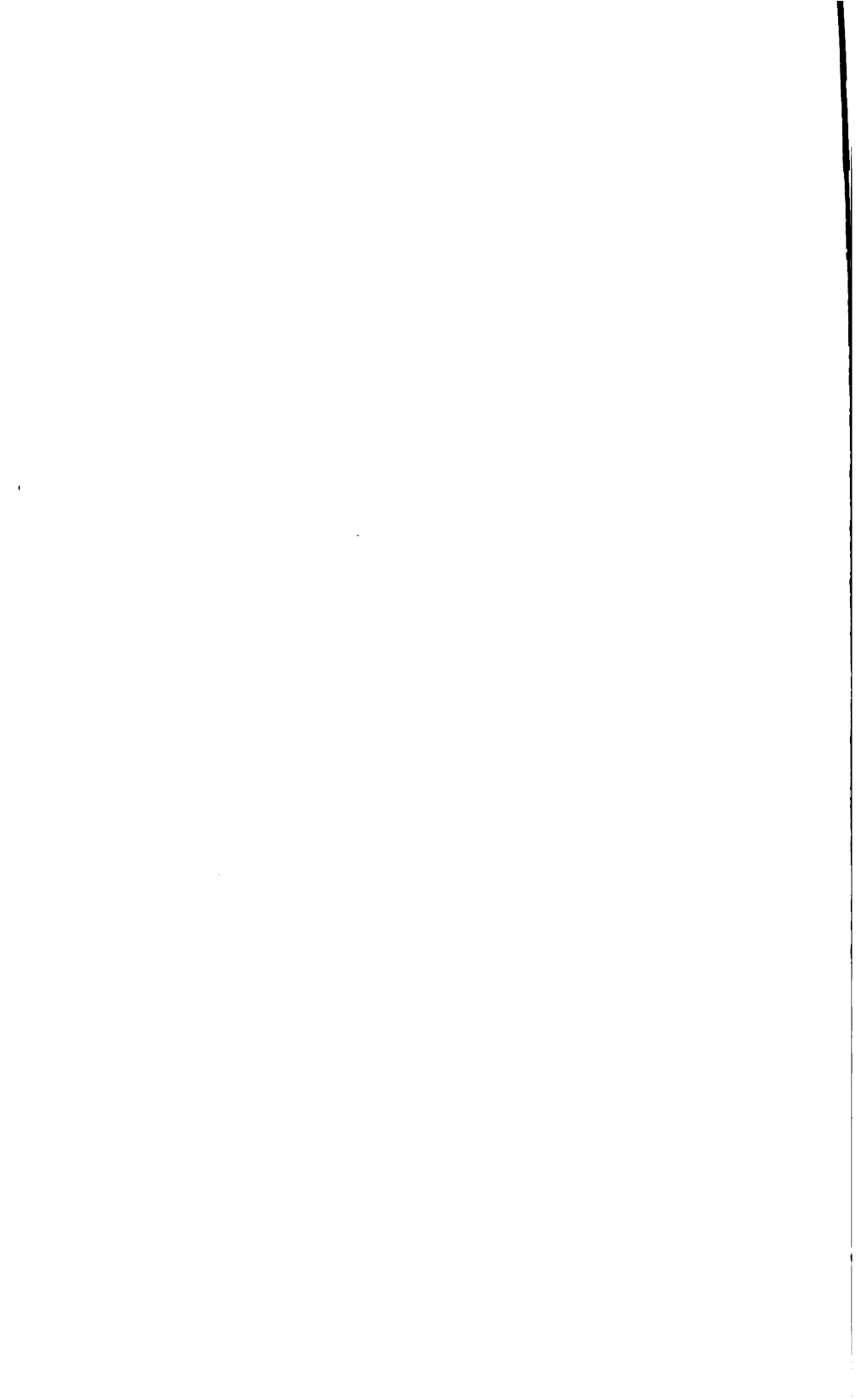
I am aware that many people condemn the half-volley as an offensive ground stroke. If it can be acquired with sufficient accuracy—and I think it is mainly a matter of confidence, when once the essentials are understood—I see no reason why it should not be used for offensive work, as it is manifest that it saves much valuable time and enables you to be nearer the net.

In *Modern Lawn Tennis*, Vaile says that I do not take advantage of my half-volley to be by so much nearer to the net. I am afraid he must have caught me on one of my "lazy days," for I generally try to

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do so, and indeed regard it as quite important that one should do so, if one wishes to get the full value of the stroke. My last word on this stroke is not the least important, and that is a repetition of the exhortation to keep your eye on the ball, for in no other stroke perhaps is this of so much importance and yet so generally neglected.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX

ENGLISH TACTICS

The following articles are by kind permission of the publishers reprinted from *The Field* of 8th and 15th October last respectively. They serve to give point in a remarkable manner to many of my contentions, both in this volume and in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, with regard to the faulty tactics and want of knowledge of rotation in the English game.

From *The Field* of 8th October, 1904.

LAWN TENNIS.

METHODS OF PLAY.

Ritchie's defeat of H. L. Doherty at Queen's Club on Thursday entitles him to take that rank which I said in *Modern Lawn Tennis* might easily be his, were he possessed of a greater knowledge of tactics and a little more equanimity. On the day he met the singles champion of the world there was little to cavil at in his tactics, and he was unusually happy. Some players thought I was overrating Ritchie, but he always seemed to me to be on the border line of becoming a great player, and if he continues to use the same tactics as he

employed in this match he will undoubtedly rank high in future. Writing of his match with H. L. Doherty in last covered courts championship I stated that the result, had Ritchie possessed Doherty's equanimity, might easily have been the other way ; but even if Ritchie had won on that occasion, I should not have given him full credit for it, for Doherty was obviously not quite "fit." He is, however, entitled to all credit for his splendid game in the event under consideration, as it was a fine exhibition of tennis from beginning to end.

I was discussing with Ritchie his chance of success before he played the match, and I told him then that if he adopted the same tactics against Doherty as he did in his previous match, in my opinion he must go perilously near to winning. Ritchie was not very confident, as he had not been playing well, but from the start he "went for" his man in fine style. He did not leave Doherty to do the attacking, as so many players do. He "took a hand" in the management of matters all the time, and never neglected a good opportunity to go up ; indeed, in this respect I think he showed much greater discretion than his opponent, who exhibited in a marked degree those faults which I stated in *Modern Lawn Tennis* would lead to his downfall against any man who was at all his equal. Doherty often ran in on short diagonal services and the shortest of returns, only to be passed by Ritchie down the lines or across the court with consummate ease and accuracy. On many occasions he was caught at the service line and beaten by the ball pitching at his feet and forcing him to attempt half-volleys. He played

many beautiful passing shots, some of his cross court passes and straight shots down the line being beyond praise, but Ritchie was clearly "on top" in every department of the game during the first two sets and a considerable portion of the third, and very nearly won three—love.

The result of this match should be of distinct benefit to the game, and should do much to discourage that indiscriminate rushing to the net, for which the undue leniency of line umpires to foot-faulters is so much to blame. It should also serve to clearly show that running in on a poor second serve, especially if it is a diagonal one, or on poor length returns must fail against an accurate player. Ritchie showed excellent judgment throughout, and selected his opportunities for going up, especially after the return of service, well. He was not passed nearly so often as Doherty was on the run up after serving. If he were to acquire the proper forehand lifting drive, so as to be able to get a little more pace into his drives, and a sharper cross court angle for his passing shots, he would, indeed, be difficult to beat, whether on grass or wood. I am inclined to think that Doherty was tiring in the last set, as he showed a want of his usual accuracy, but it must be remembered that he was being "bustled" all the time, and even if I took the first three sets only, my remarks would apply to them with equal force.

I place especial value on the result of this match on account of the fact that Doherty played his usual game. Generally speaking he is a bit above those he is playing, and he can afford to take liberties with the recognised tactics of a good single game. Unfor-

tunately, many who are nowhere near his class as low-volleyers or half-volleyers think that this must necessarily be their game, and the result is that we too often see a service, a rush to the service line, an aimlessly spooned half-volley or a semi-lob and a kill, instead of a scientifically played rest, where the players look for and seize the proper time to go up and finish matters. This continual rushing to the net has done much to ruin the men's length, as nowadays practically all a player has to think of, except against a straight-out base-liner, is passing shots, and, of course, against a "rusher," especially one who stops short, quick-dropping short passing shots, particularly across court, are of the greatest value.

Elsewhere I stated : "I do not think that promiscuous rushing in is to be encouraged, and, given two men of equal skill, the persistent rusher will go down to him who chooses his opportunity." The game under consideration is a very marked instance of the accuracy of this statement, as on the day there was but little to choose between the execution of the players ; but I do think Ritchie's tactics were the better, specially as regards following up his returns. Some might say that he ran in all the time. He certainly lost no opportunities, but he was rarely clean passed on the run up, and in his case, even if he had erred on that side, I am always inclined to be lenient, for I think no reasonable opportunity of getting to the net—not the service line—should be neglected, and, especially in his case, it was the best of generalship to press his redoubtable opponent all the time, for the value of "bustling" in a single cannot be over-

estimated, particularly when one's opponent is not accustomed to this treatment.

P. A. VAILE.

From *The Field* of 15th October, 1904.

LAWN TENNIS.

METHODS OF PLAY.

The championship of London is now held by Max Décugis, the brilliant young French player, and well he deserves the honour. The entry comprised such redoubtable players as H. L. Doherty, A. W. Gore, M. J. G. Ritchie, G. A. Caridia, H. S. Mahony, R. B. Hough, and J. M. Flavelle. Décugis's win against Flavelle was due mainly to his very fine service and good volleying, and after that to the clever way in which he avoided giving Flavelle the diagonals of the court. Décugis thoroughly understands the value of "centre theory," and it was to a very large extent this that pulled him through. Flavelle stood always too close in for the first service, and regularly left too much of the court open, for Décugis was centring his service nearly all the time. Many times was Flavelle left standing without a chance to even hit the ball. I have never seen better fast serving than Décugis's first service in his game against Flavelle. He centred it beautifully, and with excellent judgment varied it now and again by a stinging cross-court delivery. It was, however, remarkable to notice that one who is so alive to the value of centre theory as is the young Frenchman should invariably pitch his very soft second service

sharp across court, so that his opponent got every opportunity to "slaughter" it, which he not infrequently did.

If Décugis had played to the corners of the court, so that Flavelle could have got in his straight passing shots down the line, or his sharp cross-court shots, at will, he would undoubtedly have been beaten, despite his very fine service. Décugis hits his ball very high, and with slight upward motion of the racket at time of impact, and he puts plenty of body into it. The result is a very fast service of splendid length.

Décugis's match against Gore was a very interesting game. Gore played very well, drove with good pace and length, served well, and now and again came in and volleyed with success; but he was suffering from the handicap which all base-line players must suffer from when against a good player who "mixes" his game judiciously and understands centre theory. Décugis's service in this match, although at times good, was but the ghost of what it was against Flavelle, and it did not worry Gore very much. It was centre theory pure and simple that won Décugis this match. He used it most cleverly, and especially when he was quick enough to get Gore at a disadvantage on his back-hand he almost closed the court to him by centring. Time and again he had the winning position on easy volleys at the net, only to throw it away by imperfectly played shots. There are two serious defects in Décugis's volleying. He holds his racket much too loosely for all low volleys at the net, and expects the ball to do too much of the work. He does not play the stroke enough. He plays a fine fore-

hand lifting volley. If he used the same on his back-hand, it would make a very great difference in his play. The second defect is that in overhead work he lifts his eye from the ball long before he plays it. This is a cardinal sin, even in strokes which are approaching you directly, where, naturally, the margin of error is comparatively slight ; but in all balls crossing the face of the racket, either laterally or as dropping balls, it is almost fatal. Twice when he wanted but a point to win a most important game I saw him deliberately hit at two most perfect "sitters" about 4 ft. above the net, while his eye was on the place where he meant the ball to go, and where, needless to say, it did not go.

Décugis's command of lift on the fore-hand saved him many a point, as many balls which in the ordinary way would have been well out of court directly the pace was off them pitched suddenly in the court after the manner of their kind when the lift begins to talk. Gore also was getting a little "lift" on, but it seemed to me that his drive lacked sting, and Décugis was never at any time in trouble with it. After seeing Gore's play during this tournament, I shall risk saying, as I have said before, that, if he would only divest himself of the idea that he cannot volley well, he would unquestionably improve his game wonderfully. When he did come in he repeatedly finished the rest in a workmanlike and effective manner. A base-liner will never succeed in modern lawn tennis against an equally good man who understands and uses centre theory and the rotation of the ball.

Both centre theory and rotation must be studied by English players, otherwise at Wimbledon it is the

greatest certainty that ever "went out" that the Americans will do for us what the Frenchman at Queen's has just done, namely, give us an object lesson as to their value. Ritchie in his match against Doherty practically used neither, and his service at all times was diagonal. Writing of the champion's play some time since, I stated that "he goes in on nearly every service, on many which I could not pass as having sting or length enough to justify such a proceeding were his opponent his equal, and even as it is he is too often passed." "If he were playing against his equal, and had to, as he then would, choose his opportunities to go up, and was taught by a few object lessons that waiting a little inside the service line is not the best place in the court, I should think he would go very near to playing perfect tennis." I adhere to it all without qualification.

If H. L. Doherty were not the champion of the world, and if, in consequence of that fact, there were not numbers of players who have never studied the game, who are blindly following his lead in a game which is suitable for but few, and can only be justified by success, I should not trouble to refer to his tactics. We want to be able to keep our championships of the world. We need not grudge our French visitor the championship of London. We shall not retain the championship of the world on the game that is now played in England. That is my opinion now, and I shall be quite pleased to know after the championship meeting next year that I am wrong, and that I have not cause to write, "In the *Field* of Oct. 15th last I stated," &c. It is useless for anyone to try to discount

the value of Ritchie's win to the game. On the previous occasion he nearly won. Had he kept his temper, I think he would almost certainly have won. This time on exactly the same tactics, and in a hard-fought, brilliant match, one of the very best I have ever seen, he actually did win, and won in a manner which left little to be desired, except that, meritorious as his win was, his tactics were by no means perfect, as he used the diagonals of the court too much, both in serving and returning.

No one need feel hurt at my remarks about Doherty's want of ability to justify his tactics, for the simple fact that the player does not exist, and never will exist, so long as present measurements of men and courts continue, who can successfully run in on short high-bounding diagonal services or poor returns near the side line about halfway down the three-quarter court if he is opposed by an accurate player who can play a good straight shot down the side lines and a proper quick-dropping cross-court pass. It must be remembered that on short diagonals a man has frequently to cover much more than the width of the court. The available "passing ground" may be from a few feet behind the service line on one side to a few feet beyond the net on the other. Take a line from point to point, and it will not represent only 27 ft. This is not very generally considered, and much of the "stuff" that Doherty came up on to Ritchie was, on the assumption that the latter would make a fair, let alone a perfect, return, just making him a present of the ace. There are many points in connection with Doherty's play that I admire very much ; but there are so many

who cannot, or care not to, analyse his game, that I think it is well for the future of lawn tennis in this country that someone should prevent others who have not his special talents from blindly following tactics which in about 97 per cent. of instances mean courting disaster.

R. F. and H. L. Doherty beat Wilding and Mahony in the doubles after a very close game ; indeed, in my opinion, Wilding and Mahony would have won but for the fatal error of the striker-out's partner standing in at, or a little beyond, the service line. The number of strokes thus absolutely thrown away was very large. I can only speak of a thing as it appears to me, and I cannot understand why anyone willingly places himself in a position of such absolute impotence as this becomes directly his partner makes a weak stroke. The position is only justified on the assumption that the striker-out will make a nearly perfect return of the service, which, as everyone knows, he generally does not. The Dohertys themselves, when pressed and in difficulties, forsook this position, untenable even for them when against men with good, quick-dropping shots, and both of them stood on the base-line, even as did R. F. Doherty and Eaves in the final for the Metropolitan doubles, when Greville and Mann were "making things look awkward." If it is well for the striker-out's partner to be "up," why did they do this ? This unscientific position, in my opinion, spoils English double play to a great extent. The same grave error was seen all through the mixed doubles, and the way Escombe left R. F. Doherty helpless time and again by volleying at his feet was quite a lesson.

Doherty repeatedly returned the compliment. To me it is so obvious that the position is utterly wrong that I hardly have patience to refer to it. The moment a bit of "weak stuff" goes up from the striker-out it is, on paper, barring flukes, a certain ace to the server's side, and this applies with special force to the mixed game.

Wilding used the reverse American service, coming across his ball from right to left, and he scored well with it, beating H. L. Doherty again and again, as he played it back-hand and pulled it out of court very often. This, on account of its rarity, is a most useful change service. The best return for this service is to allow for its break, and take it on the fore-hand with a strong lift, for this meets and checks its rotation, and, if anything, gives him who is playing it a stronger hold of the ball for his drive. This incident should show those who doubt the utility of a knowledge of rotation the value of it. I have never seen H. L. Doherty so repeatedly and obviously beaten by a service ; indeed, I cannot call to mind any player who, generally speaking, is so sure in returning the service as he is. The reason he missed it on his back-hand nearly every time will be apparent to the student of rotation. Doherty plays his back-hand with a draw across the ball ; this ball has top spin at a slight angle to the surface of the court, to use the billiard term, "running side" ; the "cushion," that is, the racket, is travelling gently across this spin, so that the "running side" has every opportunity to do its work. Doherty did not attempt to smother the spin by force. He tried to toss the service, and the spin carried it over the side line.

Wilding and Mahony, when on the base line,

repeatedly drove at the Dohertys when they were in position at the net. This, of course, is futile. There is only one stroke that can be consistently played when this state of affairs exists, and that is the lob. The Dohertys used this judiciously, but neither in this respect nor in the matter of the striker-out's partner standing back did Mahony and Wilding take advantage of the very "strong tip" given them by their opponents.

The tournament has been most instructive, particularly in regard to the following points: (1) It has clearly established that in singles a player, even of the highest class, cannot with impunity, when dealing with an accurate opponent, come up on weak services and poor returns; (2) it has clearly shown the value of "centre theory," for it was that which won the singles championship; (3) it should have convinced those who have "eyes to see" that the present position of the striker-out's partner is untenable against good players; (4) it should have opened the eyes of players to the value of a knowledge of rotation.

We have let the championship of London go across the Channel, and although I should naturally have preferred it under ordinary circumstances to remain here, I was well content to see it go, for the loss of it may mean the retaining by our players of those much more important titles—the championships of the world, for there is no more dangerous condition of mind, in business or in sport, than that which success sometimes leads us into, of thinking that we cannot be taught anything.

P. A. VAILE.

I would not have it thought from these extracts that I am depreciating H. L. Doherty's play. His record speaks for that, but I want him to keep his position, and he will not do so on the out-of-date game that is played in England. Modern Lawn Tennis is quite a different game from that played years ago by hitting the ball with a plain-faced racket from side to side of the court.

Last year I knew, after seeing Doherty's play, that on his tactics then he could never live against an accurate side-line player, who also had a good quick dropping cross-court shot, played sound non-rushing tactics, and used centre theory. I stated this in *Modern Lawn Tennis*, and my judgment has since, as shown above, been fully confirmed. As is usual under such circumstances, friends are ready with plenty of excuses. Let them not fatigue themselves. It was not so much the player who was beaten, as was it the tactics.

Unless this lesson is laid to heart history will undoubtedly soon repeat itself, and possibly in more important engagements.

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